

CONFRONTING CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

Exegesis and Application

of Luke 10:29-37

The Good Samaritan Example Story

A Professional Project

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ABSTRACT

This professional project is designed to be the research of a passage of Scripture and to bring it to fruition in a sermon. The teaching and exhorting passage of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) has been selected. The study of the Greek text and the research of scholar's opinion will be sought.

I want to discover why the Priest, Levite, and Samaritan each reacted as he did to the confrontation with desperate need. There must be a reason for the action of each one. The confrontation of "seeing" and the resulting action must be connected by some area within a person. What is that area? Although this Scripture text does not describe this area of the inner being, it is strongly implied. What caused the Priest, Levite, and Samaritan to act decisively upon the opportunity to show mercy? I want to obtain insight into what Christ is saying about confrontation with Christian responsibility.

It is necessary for the understanding of a Scripture passage that its parabolic Genre be identified. This is the subject of chapter one.

In chapter two, I made a translation from the Greek text and the exegesis of that text. The process of conversing (research and listening) with the text included the analysis of the source, transmission, Sitz im Leben,

literary, redaction and structure. The scenes were outlined. The research experience that produced the most excitement and importance was the study of the significant Greek words. This research is climax in the retelling of the Good Samaritan story.

The theological motif opens up the vast and varied territory of personal application inherent in this Scripture passage. I searched for its meaning at the original telling and also in contemporary society.

The sermon is a rather unusual approach to the many sermonizing possibilities of this text.

The conclusion to the parabolic genre identification is that this is an example story. The Christian behavior pattern is to be exactly like that of the Samaritan.

The exegesis has led me to believe this to be an authentic story, which could have happened in everyday life, told by Jesus in a Jerusalem area setting. The significant Greek words, including the action verbs, bring an urgency to the message of Jesus. This passage ranks with the Prodigal Son as the greatest classic teaching event of Jesus' ministry, as well as of the whole Scriptures.

I discovered that the theological motif of the Good Samaritan example story includes; personal relations, way of life: love; neighbor; restoration; human worth;

confrontation; grace; social outreach; creed vs. conduct; intercession; responsible behavior; and the psyche, or soul, as the source of compassion. The theological conclusion is arranged in a confrontation action model.

The sermon, titled "Saying It With Care," proclaims the message of the text from the "feeling point" of the wounded man.

INTRODUCTION

The text chosen for this interpretative research project is Luke 10:29-37. It is popularly called the Good Samaritan.

The basic story starts with verse 30. However, verse 29 is the setting and introduction for the example story. It provides the reason and occasion for an example of neighborliness. The lawyer seeks to justify himself by asking Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Vincent Taylor believes that the lawyer's question is "an incident in the missionary activity of Jesus, and provides the opportunity for relating the Parable of the Good Samaritan."¹

This passage is part of Luke's tidings of joy which are intended to reach the ordinary person. It is written to persuade and instruct through the use of a human interest story. It is significant today because it speaks to the religious needs and realities of the present.

Origen affirms that the author of this third Gospel is Luke who wrote "for converts from the Gentiles, the gospel praised by Paul."² The person mentioned in II

¹Vincent Taylor, Behind the Third Gospel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 153.

²T. W. Manson, Studies in the Gospels and Epistles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 48.

Corinthians 8:18³ may be interpreted as Luke and his Gospel. Manson gives these particulars from the Greek

Prologue to Luke:

Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, a physician by profession. A former disciple of the Apostles who afterwards accompanied Paul until his (Paul's) martyrdom, who served the Lord continually, unmarried, childless, he fell asleep at the age of eighty-four in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit. This man, when there were already Gospels in existence----that 'according to Matthew,' written down in Judaea, and that 'according to Mark,' in Italy----impelled by the Holy Spirit, composed this whole Gospel in Achaea, making clear by his Preface this very fact that before him other (Gospels) had been written, and also that it was necessary to set forth an accurate account of the (Christian) dispensation for the believers of Gentile origin, so that they should neither be disturbed by Jewish tales, nor, through the deceitful influence of heretical and empty imagings, miss the truth. Accordingly at the very outset (of the Gospel) we have transmitted to us as being most essential (the account of) the birth of John, who is 'the beginning of the Gospel,' who was the forerunner of the Lord and shared in the preparation of the Gospel, in the baptismal instruction, and in the fellowship of the Spirit.⁴

Manson believes this tradition is reliable.

Luke declares his intention to tell about the beginning and growth of Christianity in good form (history and literature) "a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us."⁵ Luke-Acts is the first deliberate attempt to write a history of Christianity. It was written

³"one of our company whose reputation is high among our congregations everywhere for his services to the Gospel." (N.E.B.).

⁴Manson, p. 49.

⁵Luke 1:1.

by Luke on his own initiative. He used materials which he collected and then published for the outside world.⁶ His main interests in the third Gospel were:

1. to show that Christianity was not a subversive sect.
2. to support the claim that the church had superseded the synagogue as the true Israel and was entitled to the recognition and protection that the state had heretofore afforded Judaism.
3. to stress the fact that Christianity was a world religion that recognized no racial limitations. There is no counterpart in Luke to Jesus' command in Matthew, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans' (Matt. 10:5). There is nothing in Luke comparable to the saying of Jesus in Matthew, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 15:24). The story in Mark of the Syrophenician woman whose request Jesus granted only grudgingly is not reproduced. In Luke, the risen Lord declares that repentance and remission⁷ of sins should be preached in his name to all nations.

This explains the reason that Luke used the Good Samaritan story as one of the high points of his writings. Whereas, if it were available, Matthew could not harmonize it with his Gospel record.

The Greek written by Luke is superior to that used in any other New Testament book except the Epistle to the Hebrews. This is due to Luke's educational and professional refinement. His writing reveals him to be a very warm and human person as shown by the many stories and incidents of this nature which were not included in the other Gospels.

⁶Manson, p. 53.

⁷S. MacLean Gilmour, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction," Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), VIII, 5-7.

In his introduction to The Gospel of Luke, Lonsdale Ragg describes Luke in these glowing terms:

What St. Luke was as a man is reflected in his writings, wide and deep sympathy, love of souls, interest in the simple things, in manhood and womanhood, in childhood and domesticity, in the joy of life, in prayer, worship, praise, and thanksgiving; historical sense, keen observation, loyalty to fact; gift of narrative, dramatic and artistic sense, and a certain genial humor; deep enthusiasm for the Savior, the Divine-Human Christ, and for the first missionary heroes of the ascended Lord----all these are there, and much more. No wonder his Gospel is described by Renan as the most beautiful book ever written.⁸

This is exemplified in Luke's strong emphasis upon universalism (the Good Samaritan) and the lack of concern for Jewish provincialism.

Luke writes to instruct.⁹ These instructions are to catechumens. They are especially for persons of the Roman Empire who had become Christians. The instructions are about the Christian faith as revealed by Jesus, and the beginnings of the Christian movement. The purpose is to paint the picture of Jesus as the Son of God and the universal Savior. The life, work, and teachings of Jesus brought into being the universal Gospel which must be proclaimed in the Roman Empire. The merciful Samaritan is the universal Kingdom ethic of love, compassion and mercy. This theme pervades the entire Gospel.

⁸Lonsdale Ragg, The Gospel of Luke (London: Methuen, 1922), p. xi.

⁹ Κατὰ Χεῖρ (1:) means to teach, catechize, make oneself understood, to cause everyone who reads to be informed.

Luke has preserved the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan which are the apex of Jesus' teachings. The latter has aroused my interest for its analysis, research and sermon possibilities.

This study will include the significant Greek words. Research has awakened an interest concerning the inter-connecting link between ἰδῶν (seeing, confronting), τραύματα (wounds) and the ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος (doing of mercy).

Can it be discovered why the three potential helpers reacted as they did? We shall look into the background of the Priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. The source of compassion and how to set it in motion needs to be explored. Where is the locus of compassion and mercy? How can persons become active in compassion and mercy? What prevents a person from being compassionate? Why is "being a neighbor" an appropriate answer to "how can the Kingdom of God be inherited?" Why does Jesus combine spiritual and ethical responsibility? Does this passage give insight into present existence, crisis of values, feelings of being human?

Scholarly writings have been searched for material concerning the Good Samaritan. Several of the New Testament Journals have usable articles with the most helpful being Semeia 1 and Semeia 2. The Interpreter's Bible; Judaica and Jewish Commentaries; Westminster, and

International Critical Commentaries yield some information. Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon; Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament; and Richardson's Theological Word Book of the Bible gave insight into the Greek terms. The books by New Testament scholars such as Bultmann, Bornkamm, Easton, Conzelmann, Crossan, Funk, Gager, Jeremias, Kümmel, Leaney, Manson, Metzger, Patte, Perrin, Plummer, Smith, and Via bring light to our search for understanding. However, many of these make only limited reference to the Good Samaritan. There are some good books about the life and theology of Samaritans by: MacDonald, Montgomery, Thompson.

It is important, while doing Biblical exegesis, to free oneself from pre-conceived notions about the text.

There are three vital and necessary steps in preparing to teach or preach on a passage of Scripture: (1) make a good analysis; (2) make a good commentary on the results of the analysis; (3) then, prepare the sermon or teaching lesson.

Chapter 1

THE PARABOLIC GENRE

There is much argument about the classification of this story. The figurative forms of speech which come into question are: parable, similtude, allegory, fable, proverb, apocalyptic, revelation, symbol, riddle, pseudonym, example, fictitious person, theme, argument, apology, refutation, jest. The Hebrew mashal and the Aramaic mathla also include these categories. In the New Testament, the Greek παραβολή is translated parable, comparison, symbol, proverb, commonplace, riddle, and rule.

The Hebrew tradition records the use of parables before the time of Christ. Scott describes parables (lit. juxtaposition) as a story told in terms drawn from ordinary experiences (taken from life) and makes one principal point.¹ These stories are a rich source of social history as well as being popular and striking. Rabinowitz states,

just as one uses a candle, which is almost worthless, to find a precious stone which has been lost, so a parable should not be lightly esteemed in thine eyes since by means of it a man arrives at the true meaning of the words of the Torah. The rabbis made extensive

¹Robert B. Y. Scott, "Parable," Encyclopaedia Judaica (New York: Macmillan, 1971), XIII 72-76.

use of parables as a teaching method. Jesus used a well-established rabbinic form of conveying ethical and moral lessons. Some of his 31 parables (N.T.) are found in a slightly different version in rabbinic literature.²

Parables were common in both secular and religious writings. However, Jeremias believes that there is nothing to compare with the parables of Jesus whether in the entire literature of Judaism, the Essene writings, in Paul, in the Rabbinic literature or in contemporary writings.

His parables take us into the midst of throbbing, everyday life, their nearness to life, simplicity and clarity, the masterly brevity, the serious appeal to conscience, loving understanding of the outcasts of religion, all without analogy.³

Jesus used the old established parabolic method of teaching in our text to effectively present Kingdom ethics. It is necessary to establish the parabolic genre of the Good Samaritan in order to understand its meaning. From the Primitive Church to the 19th century, many scholars have called it an allegory. This is spiritualizing (evangelizing) its message, such as, comparing Christ to the Good Samaritan. They are in error. Luke's special material⁴ has no example of allegorical interpretation.

²Louis Issac Rabinowitz, "Parable: in the Talmud and Midrash," Encyclopaedia Judaica (New York: Macmillan, 1971), XIII, 73.

³Joachim Jeremias, New Testament Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 30.

⁴See page 19ff

In order to determine the parabolic classification of the Good Samaritan, it is necessary to understand that parables, in general, do not explain their subject matter but point to it in such a way that the hearer is required to grasp it. They tease the mind into active thought. The parable genre is a form of God-talk which points to features of God's kingdom as it invades into the present. The imaged-action is presented to the hearer in a way that arrests attention and requires rethinking in a new way.⁵ This description fits the Good Samaritan.

There have been many attempts by scholars in recent years to classify this story. Their efforts have produced varied results and some disagreement among themselves.

Jeremias advocates that it is a parable with "a direct hortatory application."⁶ He calls it a parable beginning with a noun in the nominative and depicting a boundless love. It is a picture that leaves a deeper impression than abstractions. He uses the general term of parable believing that all other classifications are fruitless. However, he affirms that Jesus does not construct allegories.

Bultmann believes that this text is a passage in

⁵Leander E. Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 244.

⁶Jeremias, p. 87.

narrative form proceeded by apophthegm. Apophthegms (from Greek literature) are sayings of Jesus set in a brief context. They can be reduced to bare dominical sayings by determining the secondary character of their frame and they can be compared to other sayings of Jesus.⁷

Osborn describes the teaching of Jesus as a speech-event with the use of oblique parabolic language due to the inability to explain the new teaching in ordinary descriptive prose.⁸ Although he objects to explaining parables (like trying to explain a joke), Osborn describes the exposition of a parable.

The parable is a word-event. Direct exposition retells the parable with additions or subtractions or with a change of setting. Indirect exposition will simply expound one parable by telling more parables. Parables do not stop. Every time a parable is expounded it happens again. Parables are used to enforce and illustrate that the Kingdom of God had come upon men there and then.⁹

The Good Samaritan shows that the Kingdom of God is universal, not provincial, reaching beyond rootbound Judaism.

This Good Samaritan text is called a journey or travel narrative by Bacon who believes it to be part of the

⁷Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 11.

⁸E. F. Osborn, "Parable and Exposition," Australian Biblical Review, XXII (October 1974), 14-16.

⁹Ibid.

larger mission narrative of Luke 9:51-10:42.¹⁰ It describes how the followers of Christ are to carry out their mission by doing mercy and compassion like the Samaritan rather than the uninvolved behavior of the Priest and Levite.

Crossan and Via debate the issue of the Good Samaritan's parabolic genre. Via states that Crossan believes that the so-called example stories of the Gospels (Good Samaritan included) are really parables with the deeper metaphoric level eliminated.¹¹ Crossan believes that example stories are more didactic and pedagogic, less exciting and creative of meaning than parables.¹² According to Via, Crossan holds that only v. 37b¹³ turns the narrative into an example story.

Via believes that the behavior and attitude sketched in the Good Samaritan are neither comparable nor analogous to what a person should do or avoid, but are exactly what should be done or avoided. The respective attitudes and actions are directly described rather than symbolized as human relationships. Example stories

¹⁰B. W. Bacon, "The Order of the Lukan Interpolations," Journal of Biblical Literature, XXXVII (1918), 24.

¹¹Example stories have only one point and one level.

¹²Dan Otto Via, Jr., "Parable and Example Story; A Literary Structuralist Approach," Semeia, I (1974), 105-106.

¹³And Jesus said to him, "Go, and do likewise."

(lacking plot and development) are more like theological statements than parables.¹⁴

Crossan accepts Via's term "discrete enclave of story,"¹⁵ but insists that it is a parable and not an example.¹⁶ Although Crossan believes that

exemplary stories have a striking formal relationship to parables, even if they have no figurative element at all. Exemplary stories offer examples-models of right behavior. The Good Samaritan is classed in this category. Examples, without the figurative element, are stories of how one should or should not behave in certain situations. These stories could be lived out in practice (i.e., the sower parable, it is certain that agriculture is not the point of the story). Exemplary stories command to act, or not act like this.¹⁷

Therefore, Crossan is classifying the Good Samaritan as an example story.

Smith, writing as long ago as 1937, refers to the parable of the Good Samaritan and yet in the same sentence emphatically states it is an Example-Story.¹⁸ It gives examples of character and conduct to be imitated or avoided. In contrast to parable proper, it does not teach by analogy

¹⁴Dan Otto Via, Jr., The Parables (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 12-13.

¹⁵A distinctive unit enclosed within a foreign territory.

¹⁶John Dominic Crossan, "Structural Analysis and The Parables of Jesus," Semeia, I (1974), 200.

¹⁷John Dominic Crossan, In Parables (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 56.

¹⁸B.T.D. Smith, The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels (London: Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 18.

or figure of speech, but directly.

From my research, I must assert that the Good Samaritan passage is an example story, not a parable. Most major books on parables classify this text as an example. Its message is the importance of acting as the Samaritan when confronted by the need of a person. It can be described as a memorable illustrative story.

Example stories about conduct often follow controversy dialogues. They are part of the apologetic and polemic life of the Palestinian church. Imaginary scenes are applied to a concrete occasion. The controversy here is the unloving Jews contrasted with the loving Samaritan. The counter-question (which of these do you think is a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers) following the attack (inquiry of the lawyer) is the Rabbinic way to carry on disputes. This text is an example story in narrative form proceeded by an apophthegm.

Perrin speaks of still another distinctive mark of example stories. He writes that example teaching (as well as all parabolic genre) finds more acceptance and less questioning by the reader as the authentic words of Jesus than any other literary form in the Gospels. Example stories portray the individualism of Jesus' teaching. "They are highly original and strongly stamped with the

personality of their author."¹⁹ He further believes that these stories serve as the basis for reconstruction of the historical Jesus. However, Gager firmly disagrees. He argues that example stories do not provide a greater promise of reliability. "They cannot serve as the norm of authenticity, but must be subjected to the test of dissimilarity."²⁰ As the result of my research, I do believe that the Good Samaritan is an example story out of a possible real life happening as told by Jesus.

The passage under consideration is not a parable because it does not compare the "Kingdom of God is like..." Neither is it an allegory because it does not allow spiritualizing. But as the greatest of all art stories, it is an example of Kingdom behavior. It shows example of how to "be a neighbor" in a direct, forceful manner. One's neighbor is defined in terms of deeds of mercy in a situation of need. To be provocative for shock teaching, Jesus chose a Samaritan as one who is most offensive to the Jews. In this example story, Jesus selects controversial characters (Priest, Levite, and Samaritan) to illustrate the Kingdom of God.

¹⁹Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 22.

²⁰John G. Gager, "The Gospels and Jesus: Some Doubts About Method," Journal of Religion, LIV (1974), 267.

Example stories can be analyzed by movement and can be told from various angles or viewpoints.

Chapter 2

EXEGESIS OF THE TEXT

TRANSLATION OF LUKE 10:29-37

29. But he [lawyer], desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30. Jesus continuing the discussion said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.
31. By coincidence, a Priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.
32. And so likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
33. But a Samaritan, on his travels, came upon him and when he saw him, he had compassion.
34. And went to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring over olive oil and wine, then he [Samaritan] mounted him on his [Samaritan] own beast and led him to an inn, and took care of him.
35. And the next day he took out two denarii and give them to the innkeeper, saying, 'take care of him, and whatever you spend in addition, I will pay back when I come back.'
36. Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the one who fell among robbers?"
37. He said, "the one doing the deed of mercy to him," And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

CONVERSING WITH THE TEXT

A Biblical text is a record of God's activity. It is a living document because it pulsates with life as well as explaining life in the Kingdom of God. Exegesis is

feeling the heartbeat of a text and observing its deep breaths. In fact it is possible to have conversation with a text, both speaking and listening. Successful conversation involves standing face to face, looking each other in the eye, and being aware of gestures and expressions. This is true of a text. Communication with a passage of scripture will allow it to come forth, or to lead out. The meaning of a text is never self-evident. True exegesis has been described by Karl Barth as involving much sweat and many groans. It requires an honest view of ourselves. The biggest stumbling block is our own preconceptions. The only safeguard is a thorough analysis which provides a creative encounter between the interpreter and the text. The reward of our labor (listening and research) happens when we hear the text speaking to us.

It is in the setting of preaching and teaching that the congregation (or class) is allowed to participate in the conversation that has been taking place, and in the redemptive activity of God. Thus the inner life in a passage of Scripture is discovered and shared.

TEXT ANALYSIS

Jesus' message and theology contained in this passage can be reconstructed by critical examination. The process of listening to this text will be enhanced by the search for its literary, textual, form and life situation

(Sitz im Leben) analysis. The actual teaching of Jesus can be determined by isolating the earliest layer of text; recovering the Palestinian Jewish environment; learning the Jewish issues and language.

Luke shows that the distinguishing element of the new Christian faith is having spiritual responsibility and encountering society's problems. An example is our text which is part of the distinct separate unit¹ of Luke 10:25-37. Within Luke's story is this discrete unit of Jesus' conversation with the scribe. Future tense is used in 10:25 and second person singular in 10:28 and 10:36-37. Via calls the unit 10:30-35 (omitting "Jesus replied" in 10:30) "discrete enclave of story."² Crossan believes that Luke 10:25-28 and 10:30-36 were originally separate.³ There is a fusing of story and discourse with the example story as a discrete enclave (block of thought). The verses 25-28 appear also in the synoptic gospels (Matt. 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34) and are parallel to the question about the greatest commandment. This double command to love is

¹In the previous passage, Jesus is involved with the disciples, and following the text, with Mary and Martha.

²Dan Otto Via, Jr., "Parable and Example Story: A Literary Structuralist Approach," Semeia, I (1974), 111.

³Ibid., p. 105.

the connection. Jesus often repeated himself by double commandments, like other great teachers. It is the lawyer's desire to justify himself that sets the stage for Jesus' example story. Jeremias suggests

if we are supposing that the Scribe, in repeating this command, was quoting one of Jesus' sayings his 'desiring to justify himself' becomes intelligible; although he knows what Jesus thinks, he is justifying himself for asking him.⁴

The distinguishing element of Luke's universal Gospel is the lawyer's further questioning about who is my neighbor in verses 29-37. Luke has available to him the account of a confrontation between a lawyer and Jesus which results in an impressive story about the Good Samaritan. This account is peculiar to Luke which raises questions about the text. Where did Luke get it? Why didn't the other Gospel writers know about or use it? Is it that this story of boundless love is really Luke's special message about God's love for persons which is to be translated into being aware and sharing love with others?

Jülicher believes that the story was first inserted here by Luke from another context. The shift from neighbor that is to be loved of v. 29 to the man that loves his neighbor of vv. 30-37a is psychologically comprehensible

⁴Joachim Jeremias, Rediscovering the Parables (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 158.

when Luke's combining artistry is assumed.⁵ Bultmann believes that "it is clear that the beginning of the question in v. 36 and the answer in v. 37 were given to Luke, and from this, the question in v. 36 was prepared with a degree of artificiality."⁶ After his introduction, Luke had to reconstruct his question and answer so as to make the attacked man the neighbor. Luke could not have been given just the beginning of the question in v. 36. He must have ignored its content and at the same time have kept so slavishly to its form that to do so he put up with logical discrepancies. This process is without parallel in the synoptics.⁷ Klostermann believes the inconsistency between the question of v. 29 and the answer given in the example story was meant to be hidden by v. 36.⁸

Jülicher, Klostermann, and Bultmann are at one in the assumption that the framework of vv. 29 and 36 does not fit the story and was only connected with it later. The point of the story according to Jülicher is that

the self-sacrificing practice of love has the highest worth in the eyes of God and of man. No advantage of position or birth can replace it. The merciful man

⁵Eta Linnemann, Jesus of the Parables (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 139.

⁶Rudolph Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 178.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Linnemann, p. 140.

earns blessedness even if he is a Samaritan, rather than the Jewish temple-official, who is enslaved to selfishness. According to Bultmann, the point of the story lies in the contrast of the unloving Priest and Levite with the loving Samaritan.⁹

It is still not known how Luke acquired his special material. More knowledge about its origination would enhance its meaning. The value of the special Luke material depends upon the fidelity with which he has reproduced the narratives and parables. It is at least as early as Mark. His details of one story pass over into another.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

The source of this example story or even the entire special material of Luke is not known. Jesus may have been influenced by an Old Testament passage. There is a similar story in 2 Chronicles 28:5-15. Perhaps Luke found it among the oral and written sources at Caesarea and other centers in Palestine.¹⁰ This special tradition contains 279 verses (most of Luke 9:51-18:14) and is rich in narratives, parables and sayings peculiar to Luke. It is possibly a

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰William Manson, The Gospel of Luke (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), p. xix.

portion of Q that was omitted by Matthew.¹¹ Sanders¹² believes that it is marshalled, organized, or ordered according to Deuteronomy chapters 1-26. Every important word (Luke's special tradition) is picked up and corresponds directly to Deuteronomy. Sanders contends that Jesus is teaching from the Deuteronomy passage. There is a striking similarity between the message of Deuteronomy and that of Jesus as recorded by Luke. They are both saying that no one should assume to be the "in group" and among the elect. The most confident aren't going to enter into the Kingdom of God.¹³ That is the meaning of the refusal by the Priest and Levite to aid the wounded man. Manson states that Luke's special material "might be called in a special sense the Gospel of the Outcast."¹⁴ Luke records Jesus as selecting a Samaritan to show mercy.

¹¹S. MacLean Gilmour, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction," Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), VIII, 14.

¹²James Sanders, "How Do We Move From Christocentric Theology to a Theocentric Christology," Cassett 744a (November 6, 1973) School of Theology at Claremont.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴T. W. Manson, Studies in the Gospels and Epistles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p.59.

TRANSMISSION OF TEXT AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

Whatever is the text history of Luke's special material, it is certain that the text has passed through the understanding of primitive Christianity and has been transmitted to us with a particular interpretation. The original listeners heard this story from a carpenter and wandering Rabbi with the scandal and stumbling block of it still intact. The specific audience was an opponent attacking Jesus, but it is also an example story for his followers. The narrator must be a Jew speaking to Jews in a Jerusalem situation. In fact, this controversial dialogue had a proper place in the apologetic and polemic life of the Palestinian church. It is the Rabbinic way to carry on disputes. Story telling was the natural way of preaching at that time. The imaginary scenes illustrate a concrete occasion in the church.

Since the narrator gives no editorial comments condemning the robbers or praising the Samaritan, it is an objective story rather than rhetorical. The subject/ordainer is directly identified as a Samaritan but the receiver is indirectly identified as a Jew. This is known from the narrator's position.

The details of the story suggest that it was spoken in Jerusalem or its neighborhood. There is a road that leads from the high altitude of Jerusalem, by way of Bethany,

through a dangerous, rocky, uninhabited wilderness, a distance of 150 stadia (Josephus), 17 miles down¹⁵ to Jericho in the Jordan Valley. Along the way is a rocky, dangerous gorge known as "the bloody way" by the dark red color of the overhanging rocks. Raiding bands of Arab robbers were active on this desert and rocky road. Robberies, muggings and even murders happened "as you might expect."¹⁶ Travelers on this road which winds between bare limestone cliffs pitted with caves have always been exposed to the attacks of Bedouin robbers. A person deeply wounded, robbed, and left to fate would die a miserable death if no one gave help.¹⁷ It is possible that Jesus was on this road, when he told this example story, walking towards Bethany (located on this road) where the next event takes place (vv. 38-42).¹⁸ Since the spot is unmistakable, it causes one to believe that the narrative has been taken from real life history, not from

¹⁵According to Jerome and Klostermann the fall in height over the 17 miles is just under $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Farrar believes the distance is 21 miles. However, the translators Handbook on the Gospel of Luke states that Jericho is some 20 miles from Jerusalem and that the road descends about 3000 feet from Bethany to the plain of the Jordan river.

¹⁶H.D.A. Major, T.W. Manson, and C.J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: Dutton, 1938), p. 554.

¹⁷Linnemann, p. 52.

¹⁸Alfred Plummer, The Gospel According to St. Luke (Edinburgh: Clark, 1906), p. 286.

fiction.

It was a common occurrence for a Priest or Levite (temple servant) to travel the dangerous road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Many priestly families resided in Jericho which was known as a priestly city. Each Priest and Levite had to be in Jerusalem for eight days while his course was performing the temple worship. There were twenty four courses.¹⁹ Therefore, these men are to be considered returning home after completing their eight day shift at the Jerusalem temple.

Jesus most likely spoke this narrative in Aramaic which was the primary oral and literary language of the Palestinian Jew in Jesus' day. However, Greek had become the international language of the Greco-Roman world since Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. It was the language of commerce, politics and some literature. It may have been necessary for each Jew to have been bilingual in order to transact business outside his own race. Sevenster states that the writer of the fourth Gospel assumes that Jesus did not belong to the Greek-speaking Jews.²⁰ There is a case where the greeks did not address Jesus directly, but turned to Philip who had a true Greek name.

¹⁹Paul Billerbeck and Hermann Strack, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud and Midrash (Munchen: Beck, 1922) II, pp. 55-68, 180.

²⁰J. N. Sevenster, Do You Know Greek? (Leiden: Brill, 1968), p. 25.

It is natural to assume that Jesus was able to speak directly to the people of these regions in their own language (in many places, Greek). Birkeland²¹ holds that Jesus spoke a language that was neither Aramaic nor classical Hebrew, but more like Mishnah Hebrew. Sevenster disagrees and points out that comprehensive studies²² show that the language which Jesus knew best and usually spoke was Aramaic.

The most plausible conclusion is that all sorts of data in the Gospels argue that the language spoken daily by Jesus and many of his contemporaries was Aramaic. This does not mean that they did not know Hebrew or Greek. The Hebrews used Aramaic in their daily intercourse and also their meetings of the congregation.²³

There were four languages used in Palestine during the first century. Aramaic was the language of the people of the land. This together with Hebrew were the main literary mediums.

Jesus used the characteristic features of Jewish poetry of parallelism, antithesis, and rhythm as well as semitic methods of illustration as example stories from everyday life in Palestine. Both Jew and Gentile hearers of Jesus understood and were impressed by his teaching.

Luke summarizes the process of transmission of the text in one sentence.²⁴ First, there were the events

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 33.

²³Ibid., p. 37.

²⁴Luke 1:1.

themselves ("the things which have been accomplished among us"), then came the oral tradition ("they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word"), the next step included the writing and the assembling of passages ("many have undertaken to compile a narrative"), finally came Luke's own contribution ("it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account").²⁵

The narratives that Luke transmitted were very popular with his readers. His writings (Luke-Acts) which probably fit on a thirty-foot papyrus roll suited Luke's church. Taylor²⁶ feels that Luke's work is mainly interpretative but with fidelity to the tradition. This is a work of art placing Jesus in a dramatic and picturesque form. Luke reproduces the earliest tradition with special interests, such as Samaritans and mercy.

Some scholars hold that Jesus originally told this story using a merciful Israelite (to oppose the Priest and Levite) to rescue the man beaten by the Bedouin robbers. The purity laws for Israelites in the Mishnah²⁷ classed the

²⁵ Gilmour, p. 16.

²⁶ Vincent Taylor, The Life and Ministry of Jesus (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 27-29.

²⁷ Herbert Danby (ed.), Mishnah, English (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p.49.

Samaritan with swine. These scholars propose that Luke, in his emphasis on the universalism of the Gospel, inserted a Samaritan (as one hated by Jews) to oppose the Priest and the Levite behavior and their failure to give loving aid to the hurt man. Luke has a Samaritan interest, in fact, Samaritans are mentioned only once in the Synoptics outside this special Lukan section (9:51-18:14).

The origin of the Samaritan people is recorded in 2 Kings 17:3. There are two references in the interbiblical literature to the Samaritans: wisdom of Ben Sirach and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Levi Chap. 7). These passages relate the hostility and contempt which a rigid Jew felt toward Samaritans. The theology of the Samaritans notes the

belief that Moses' return as Tareb (Restorer) will involve his spirit in a new body born on earth. The actual body of Moses remains buried in the cave on Mount Nebo.²⁸

Could it be that Luke and even Jesus himself portrayed the Good Samaritan as restorer of the wounded Israelite as a type of Moses?

Two other words are significant in the transmission of this passage. One is lawyer. Luke uses the word

²⁸John MacDonald, The Theology of the Samaritans (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 14.

ρομικός to introduce this story rather than the usual word γραμματεὺς for one concerned with the Mosiac law. Luke's term carries more force as an expert in the Torah. The other word is neighbor which is used as a catchword connection between the example story and the dialogue about the greatest commandment. This term, which is the basis for the independently circulating Good Samaritan example, refers to the great concern of both the first century Judaism and the early Christian church.²⁹

The early church heard it as the true word for that day. Their interpretation is still present in its understanding. During the course of transmission this story was loosed from its original historical situation. However, it does tell us a great deal about how the story was understood in the early church. The Good Samaritan was used in preaching, teaching, exhortation and proclamation for the building up of the church. It was the Gospel writers who first connected the individual units of tradition with a theological motive, rather than historical or biographical interest. Luke's church related this story to its own situation---problems and difficulties. It needed answers from the Word of the Lord.³⁰

²⁹Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (New York: Harper & Sons, 1967), p. 123.

³⁰Linnemann, pp. 42-47.

The Good Samaritan story was transmitted during the early Christian centuries by means of Papyrus writings. This story is in Papyrus 45, a third century document, belonging to the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri of Gospels and Acts. It is partly Alexandrian and partly Western text. The concluding verse (v. 37) has been located in Papyrus 75, also a third century document, which agrees with B and Papyrus Bodmer.³¹ These Papyri documents, dated by Palaeographers, provide the oldest available text of this passage.

The reason that this story has been faithfully preserved, although Luke is the sole transmitter, is the provocative force of what the terms---Jerusalem, down, Jericho, Priest, Levite, Samaritan---mean in their socio-psychological semiotics³² (semantics) inherent in these expressions. Via writes that the story can only be read morally as an invitation to charity.³³ Jesus uses the story as a tool to communicate his own understanding of neighbor and mercy. This urgent dialogue of exhortation has the power of persuasion to overcome resistance to doing good. Linnemann describes it as a language event that decisively alters the situation. It creates a new

³¹Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 251-256.

³²John Dominic Crossan, "Structural Analysis and the Parables of Jesus," Semeia, I (1974), 201.

³³Via, p. 226.

possibility that did not exist before. The power of language is used to cause the man addressed to arrive at an understanding and to cross the line of opposition that exists with the man addressing. The story not only opens new understanding but also compels the lawyer to make a decision. This example story of Jesus reaches into the depth of existence. It is a call to truth and offers the possibility to make a change in the way of life. The Good Samaritan is a language event because something decisive happens through what has been said.³⁴

The preservation of the Good Samaritan story is also due to the fact that it is a story of Kingdom behavior. Baird³⁵ places it in a contextual category where the explanation comes in the literary or historical context of the story. This contextual explanation removes all doubt about the meaning and application of it. Jesus is invoking his authority to control the direction and nature of life in the new Christian community. This Mosaic law expert (lawyer) asks this new traveling Rabbi (Jesus), who draws big crowds about the way to eternal life. But, Jesus counters with another question concerning which of the six hundred thirteen commandments in the Torah is the greatest

³⁴Linnemann, p. 30-32.

³⁵J. Arthur Baird, "A Pragmatic Approach to Parable Exegesis: Some New Evidence," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVI (1957), 203-205.

commandment.³⁶ It is possible that the lawyer was testing Jesus from the standpoint of a potential disciple. The lawyer answers with a two-fold commandment of love: love to God, Deut. 6:5; and love to neighbor, Lev. 19:18. The great concern of "who is my neighbor" is the natural Sitz im Leben (life situation) of both first century Judaism and the life and work of the early Christian church.³⁷ The power and vividness proves to Perrin the story's authenticity.

The Sitz im Leben of the Good Samaritan is the situation and attitude of the community.³⁸ This error and truth conduct of life in the Kingdom of God is the emphasis of Jesus' message. It deals with the basic problems of human existence. Jesus uses it as a controversial weapon against the critics and foes of the Gospel.

The Good Samaritan example story, according to Deissmann, was successful in hitting the popular tone. Luke in writing to his church was aware and concerned about the life-and-death struggle going on in the world, and their way of life. He is telling the church that they

³⁶The common question of debate was which of the commandments is the greatest. God had commanded the Torah and it must be observed without deviation or favoritism.

³⁷Perrin, p. 123.

³⁸Bultmann, p. 39.

cannot pass by on the other side with indifference as the Priest and Levite did in the Good Samaritan story. Luke is aware that the populace have fallen among the thieves of tyrant rulers and been beaten to near death. He knows that the church has the power and capability of administering health and strength through God's love to the people. An important difference of the Christian faith is having spiritual responsibility and facing society's problems. Luke has available to him the account of a confrontation between a lawyer and Jesus which results in an impressive example story about the Good Samaritan. Universalism of the Gospel and Kingdom behavior are emphasized here by both Jesus and Luke.

REDACTION ANALYSIS

A redaction analysis chart can be drawn from the information which Luke provides (1:1), the travel information available, and the geography in this text and other Lukan material.

1. Jesus teaches "Good Samaritan" → 2. Heard by lawyer, disciples & followers →
 3. used in oral teaching and preaching → 4. written pericopae →

Luke's Research

5. From eyewitnesses + 6. From personal contacts + 7. From written pericopae +
 8. Luke's interview with John + 9. Luke's interview with Paul---knowledge of the early church ==
 10. Luke's personal report of what he heard and learned

The power of the argument in this story is that what is admitted in one case cannot be contested in an exactly corresponding case. Illustration works by reality with the example proving the narrator right. The subsidiary characters are described only in so far as it is necessary. There is no description of the man who went down to Jericho or of the innkeeper. Feelings and emotions are only mentioned when they are essential for the action or the point. The Good Samaritan had compassion.³⁹

³⁹Linnemann, pp. 4-5.

STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

What is the meaning of this passage for Jesus?

Crossan⁴⁰ presents the following structure of the narrative and its meaning to Jesus:

- (a) 10:30a "a man...fell among robbers"
- (b) 10:30b terse description of action of robbers
- (c) 10:31 "a priest...saw him...passed by on the other side"
- 10:32 "a levite...saw him...passed by on the other side"
- 10:33 "a Samaritan...saw him...he had compassion"
- (b') 10:34-35 very long description of the action of the Samaritan
- (a') 10:36 "the man...fell among the robbers"

It may be indicative to note the word distribution even in the English translation: (a) 14 words; (b) 12; (c) 22, 19, 19; (b') 66; and (a') 17 words. This structure shows a poet's rhythm and a master's style.

When a narrative is reduced to its basic elements, then it becomes clear what happens in the text and its relation to other texts. The surface structures, are evident, but also the superficial and the deep structures.

Patte⁴¹ uses the following diagram to show how a

⁴⁰John Dominic Crossan, In Parables (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 62.

⁴¹Daniel Patte, "An Analysis of Narrative Structure and the Good Samaritan," Semeia, II (1974), 4.

narrative is viewed as a sign:

Sign	{	Expression (signifier)
		Relation
	}	Content (signified)

The sign has power to evoke, suggest and pre-suppose.

There are seven functions in a narrative as follows:

- (a) arrival vs. departure (or departure vs. return)
- (b) conjunction vs. disjunction
- (c) mandate vs. acceptance or refusal
- (d) confrontation
- (e) domination vs. submission
- (f) communication vs. reception⁴²
- (g) attribution vs. deprivation

Patte lists six actants in a diagram of actantial model:

Addresser	Object	Addressee
Helper	Subject	Opponent

The actions expressed by the verbs has one of the seven functions above. According to Patte, the Good Samaritan as a parable is a narrative which is an element of a larger narrative. He identifies the disjunctional functions as:

- (a) movement of the 'man' (from Jerusalem to Jericho), man is both subject and object of his actions.
- (b) departure of the robbers, the robbers had a contract, moved to road location and performed successfully. The 'man' had two helpers: his vigor and belongings. He is deprived of both and is now helpless. Now he changes from being subject to being object.
- (c1) journey of the Priest, a 'going down' movement from somewhere to somewhere.
- (c2) arrival 'at that road' and departure of the Priest. This is a mini-narrative. The Priest had accepted a mandate and was in movement to carry it out.

⁴²Ibid., p. 7.

The Priest accepted an anti-contract 'by chance.' There is a confrontation 'seeing' a helpless (lack) man. The unexpected contract is overcoming this lack, which aborts when Priest refuses confrontation. He resumes movement to carry out his original contract.

- (d1) journey of the Levite, same analysis and same conclusion as the Priest.
- (d2) arrival 'at that road' and departure of the Levite.
- (e1) the Samaritan's situation is similar to the Priest's and Levite's. He comes 'by chance' also. His very journey is the unknowing acceptance of a contract.
- (e2) arrival 'at that road' of the Samaritan (movement from road to inn). The Samaritan arrives. The confrontation 'he saw' is accepted with 'he had compassion.' The man's helplessness and wounds concern him, so the Samaritan enters the man's story. He goes to him.⁴³
- (e3) departure of the Samaritan.

The Samaritan (subject) struggles against the opponent which is the result of the action of the robbers. The helpers used included: oil, wine, his own beast, money and innkeeper's services bought with money. The Object is man's vigor that is being restored.

A dialogue with innkeeper interrupts the narrative. The effect of robber's action will be healed. The man's vigor will be restored so he can resume his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho and carry out his initial contract.⁴⁴

The context emphasis is on movement and journey. Crespy lists three communications: "Luke to Theophilus,

⁴³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 14-19.

Jesus to the lawyer, and both to the interpreters of the law."⁴⁵ The parable contains forces of opposition between the lawyer and Jesus in the dialogue; the robbers and Samaritan; the lawyer and Priest/Levite. The neighbor is a dialogic relationship which reverses what one expects of such relationship. The contextual narratives are filled with coming and going movement.

The action verbs are very prominent in this passage. Everything is related to movement:

to read (26), to reply (27), to say (28), to justify by saying (29), to go down (30), to fall among (30), to strip (30), to go away (30), to go down (31), to come near, to see (32-33), to approach (34), to bind up the wounds (34), to pour oil and wine (34), to lift (34), to take (34), to take care (34), to give money, to take care, to pay, to return (35), to be the neighbor of (36), to show mercy, to go, to do (37).⁴⁶

The meaning of word neighbor has a radical change at the end of narrative compared with the beginning. The neighbor is the one who draws near. The Samaritan draws near while Priest and Levite move away. The word neighbor is the pivot of the entire text.

⁴⁵George Crespy, "The Parable of the Good Samaritan: an Essay in Structural Research," *Semeia*, II (1974), 27.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 32.

A diagram of the questions:

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Initial question:
What must I do to inherit
life? | A. Final answer:
No apparent answer |
| B. First question:
What is written in the Law? | B. First answer:
It is written:
you shall love...
your neighbor |
| C. Second question:
Who is my neighbor? | C. Second answer:
The parable. |
| D. Third question:
Who do you think was
neighbor? | D. Third answer:
The one who showed
mercy and gives
life. ⁴⁷ |

Crespy diagrams this parable in the following
manner:

<u>Sender:</u> Lawyer	<u>Object:</u> Law	<u>Receiver:</u> Jesus
<u>Sender:</u> Man	<u>Object:</u> Man	<u>Receiver:</u> Man
<u>Helper:</u> Samaritan	<u>Subject:</u> Man	<u>Opponent:</u> Bandits
<u>Helper:</u> Samaritan Lawyer	<u>Subject:</u> Mercy	<u>Opponent:</u> Priest & Levite ⁴⁸

The formula crisis (victimized) -- Response 1
(Priest & Levite) -- Response 2 (Samaritan) describes the
Good Samaritan parable. This formula also fits the

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 44.

Prodigal Son parable.

The dynamics present in this text include: eternal life, law, neighbor, mercy, ambush, wounded, indifference, Samaritan, drawing near, the elect, rescue of the wounded, value judgment.

It is important to look at the parable as to how it places the hearer in relation to the events and attitudes of the narrative. The question is where does the narrative place the listener? Who is this man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho? It is any Jew in everyday occurrence on a dangerous piece of road. How does it feel to be a victim in the ditch? Waiting for development? The Priest happens by. The clergy hearers are resentful and move away down the road. The rest of the listeners, anti-clerical, knew that would happen and continue to identify with victim. The Levite passes by and reinforces the former scene. But no one is ready for the Samaritan to come and have compassion. The presence of this hated Samaritan really confuses all the listeners especially the religious outsiders (in the ditch). The audience must face the question of who of you will be served by a Samaritan? The victim has no choice but to receive the mercy. The story is understood as a person allows own self to be drawn into the narrative---just as the lawyer did. Everyone is invited into the action. Meaning happens by the way

listeners take up roles and play out the drama.⁴⁹ The hearer's deep structure of expectation is attached and is opened to new possibilities of values and action.

The three potential rescuers cause us to focus on the third as the actual helper even before he arrives.

The key concept is neighbor. The question of the lawyer---who is my neighbor---is in the active; while, the final question of Jesus---who proved to be neighbor---is in the passive. There is movement concerning neighbor: the robbers move to wound and strip him; Priest and Levite move away; the Samaritan draws near. The Greek word ἀντιπαρέρχομαι means to pass by, and προσέρχομαι means to draw near. Value judgment is based upon these two movements with the wounded man as center to be judged whether inferior or worthy of help. The man waits in suspense to be recognized as neighbor.

The lawyer is confronted with this neighbor-concept, as was the Samaritan, to do likewise (show mercy to every person). The wounded, needy persons can be restored.

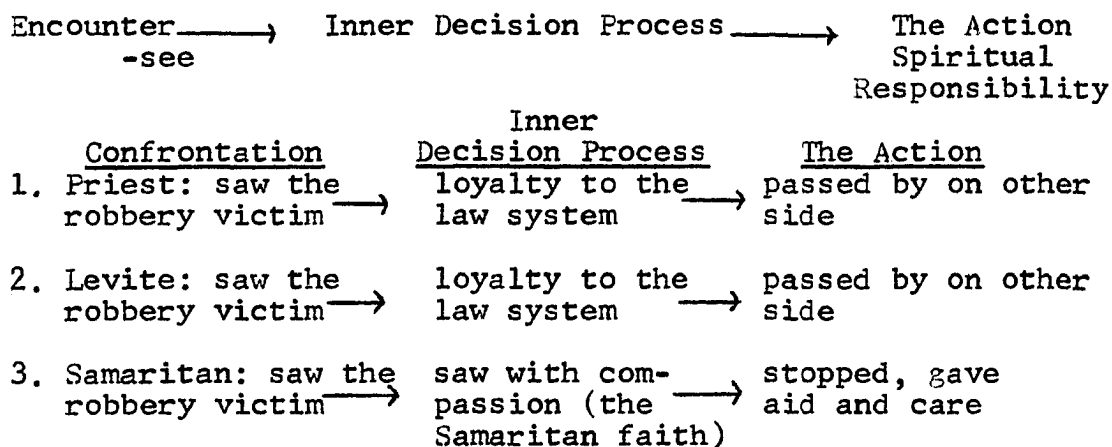
Πλησίον is found in these other New Testament passages: Matthew 5:43 (compatriot), 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; John 4:5; Acts 7:27; Romans 13:9-10, 15:2; Galatians 5:14; Ephesians 4:25. It is in neuter form. As

⁴⁹Robert W. Funk, "The Good Samaritan as a Metaphor," Semeia, II (1974), 74-80.

adjective, it goes back to Homer, and as adverb it is used in Homer, inscriptions, papyrus, LXX, Enoch, Philo, Josephus, the Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs.

Jesus' role and person in the Good Samaritan is to make the lawyer think and not excuse or justify his way out of confronting spiritual responsibility. There is a deep relationship between word and deed. What causes a person to see what is seen, to bring encounter to own inner being. As a person thinks in own heart so is that person. The following diagram structure presents the confrontation-action system.

THE CONFRONTATION -- ACTION STRUCTURE



Crossan⁵⁰ presents the four separate units as:

1. question concerning eternal life 10:25-28
similar to Matt. 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-31
2. question regarding one's neighbor 10:29
3. example story---Good Samaritan 10:30-35

⁵⁰Crossan, In Parables, pp. 62-63.

4. conclusion with
 question 10:36
 answer 10:37a
 admonition or command 10:37b

THE SCENES

This text can be analyzed by movement. The action-verbs are predominant. For instance:

- Scene I v. 30 A man goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He is robbed. He is stripped. He is beaten. He is left half-dead. It always happens on that road. It is like getting mugged in New York City, which happens every day. There is movement from one point to another. The man and the robbers are anonymous.
- Scene II v. 31 A Priest, a religious figure, goes down the road by coincidence. He may have been officiating at the Jerusalem temple. He sees with a visual encounter. The *ʾšwr* is important language. The encounter is not accepted. It is denied. The Priest passed by on the other side. He does not see the viewpoint of wounded man laying in hot sun and hurting.
- Scene III v. 32 A Levite also comes to the place. He is a religious figure, temple servant, likewise. People always come down that road everyday. The Levite sees (*ʾšwr*) and rejects the confrontation, therefore, passes by on the other side.
- If a person has flat tire in the desert, there are always cars passing by. It is a critical situation. Help is needed. The Levite also went by.
- Scene IV v. 33 A Samaritan, on his travels, came upon the wounded man. We learn about him. The verbs are important. The description is clear. He sees (*ʾšwr*) and has confrontation. His heart turns over with compassion. The Samaritan says yes to confrontation.

- Scene IV v. 34 He goes to him. He is determined to undo what the robbers did to the man. He crosses over the road and kneels down beside the wounded man. He makes bandages out of his own cloak and bounds up the wounds. He pours olive oil and wine on the wounds. They act as salve and anti-septic. Then, he mounts the man upon his own animal and leads him to the inn. The Samaritan takes care of him.
- Scene V v. 35 Next day, the Samaritan pays the innkeeper two (2) denarii. He instructs the innkeeper to take care of the wounded man. The innkeeper acts as a hired substitute in the restoring process. The Samaritan accepts complete responsibility by promising to pay on his return trip. He departs.
- Scene VI v. 36 Jesus asks the decisive question, which of these three is neighbor to the victim.
- v. 37a The mosaic law expert answers: the one doing mercy.
- v. 37b Jesus gives exhortation: Go and do likewise.

MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS

νομικός ---a person learned in the law, a legal expert in the Mosaic law, a jurist. He addresses Jesus as Rabbi, thus recognizing him as of equal status. Questions were the customary way to test a strange Rabbi's knowledge. Luther's translation of "tempt" is not in the Greek meaning. A hebrew scholar is one who immediately gives correct answer to questions about the Halakhah (rules for conduct of life). The questions begin with Hebrew concept of neighbor. That is the purpose of the story. It is necessary to settle the question of who counted as fellow person before the laws of relationship could be followed.

ἄνθρωπος ---a man...This is a man story. He goes on a journey down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He is probably a citizen of Jerusalem and most likely a Jew. His wounding experience is described. The robbers leave him half-dead. The man is confronted by two (2) religious officials who refuse to give aid. He is

confronted by a foreign half-breed who sees him with compassion. He receives medical attention and a room and food. All bills are paid for him.

ἱερεὺς ---Priest. Josephus uses the term only for those consecrated to God's service in the temple. He has a ministry and is devoted to the holy and sacred study. The priestly code dealt with the ceremonial regulations. His task is to guard the sanctuary and to preserve the sacred traditions. The office of the Priest originated at Sinai with consecration of Aaron. Deuteronomy attempted to limit the exclusiveness of the Jerusalem Priests and failed. Priests were highly influential, but they were not liked by the people of the land. They have sufficient power to set up or remove kings. They officiated at Jerusalem temple in 8-day shifts and usually made their residence in Jericho. Jesus gave many irritating barbs to Priests such as this Good Samaritan Story. A Priest would be ceremonially unclean and unable to perform ministry if he came near a dead body on the way to Jerusalem. Both Priest and sacrifice must be whole without blemish. There is no religious reason why he could not do mercy to the victim on his way down to Jericho. Christ does not permit excuse for Priest. The common people had no respect for Priests who represent the Jewish pre-eminence. In Jesus' day, the professional responsibility for the Torah (law) had been given to the Scribes with the Priests doing only the sacrificial acts in the temple, therefore, it is very possible that the Priest and Levite were not versed in the command about neighbor. If so, then the Priest and Levite were acting from their own selfish and non-involvement. Whereas, if they were versed in the Law, then their action negated the Torah as well as their own personal decision-making responsibility. Their response to confrontation with need came from their psyche as did the Samaritan's reaction of compassion to need came from his own psyche (soul). Therefore, the Priest and the Levite need to accept full responsibility for their reaction to the victim.

Λευίτης ---Levite, a temple servant. His duty was to perform the lowlier services of Temple ritual. A cultic officer of second rank, he renders subordinate services in the sanctuary. He takes the same attitude as the Priest toward the victim. He sees. He is confronted. He rejects aid to the wounded man. He passes by on the other side. The Levite represents the religious layman.

He reacts like many people in the presence of a serious social problem. It sometimes happens that religious profession and service have no connection with real goodness.

Σαμαριῖταις ---Samaritan. Luke brings the Samaritans into prominence in his special material (Luke 9:51-18:4). They are mentioned only one other time in the Synoptics and in a negative manner (Matt. 10:5).

The story of their origin is given in II Kings 17:3ff. Samaria is described as a verdant hill-country with many beautiful valleys in contrast to rocky, barren Judea. It has accessible valleys to the outside world. Its people were of a passionate character. The population resulting from the deportation of the inhabitants of the northern Kingdom, Israel (descendants of Joseph), and the introduction of Gentile foreigners from various conquered countries made a half-breed people called Samaritans. They were despised by the Jews who prided themselves on maintaining foreign elements. The Testament of the twelve Patriarchs (Levi, Chap. 7) states that from this day shall Shechem (religious center of Samaria) be called the city of fools. The holy mount is Gerizim where the Samaritan temple is located. The Torah is the holy book of the Samaritans whereas the Jews added the prophets. Samaritan creed is more national than a personal matter.

There are seven covenants which bind them as the only chosen people of God: (a) Noah (Gen. 9:8-17); (b) Abraham (Gen. 17:4-14); (c) the Sabbath (Exod. 31:12-17); (d) the ten commandments (Exod. 20:2-17); (e) salt (Numbers 18:19); (f) passover (Exod. 12:2ff); (g) the priesthood (Numbers 25:12,13). They are bound to keep these covenants which separate them from the Jews and from the Gentiles. They call themselves Samaritan Israelites. They regard man as having soul and body, but have no concept of freedom of will, nor original sin. The Memar Margah, book of wonders, is the third most important work (Pentateuch and Targum) of Samaritanism. The Memar Margah states that one of the social ethics curses is: cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, you are not to desert him. It is not right for you to forsake him, because God selected him. It is not right for any Priest or judge to pass by, but they are to manifest the truth, as the Lord commanded them. Do not abandon the sojourner ever, for "I" have given a command in connection with all this. Man possesses life because God gave it to him.

Mercy is an awesome a thing as power to the Samaritan. Religion, ethics and spiritual teachings merge together. If we put God's words into effect, then He will put the blessings into effect.

From the main ethical teaching of Deuteronomy 27, the Marqah lists these categories of proper behavior: (1) one's duty to anyone who is spiritually, mentally, or physically blind; (2) as a brother's keeper the person who abandons one unconsciously walking in evil is responsible for that one; (3) duty to not harm sojourner by word or action; (4) sexual aberration (Deut. 27:20) violates the law, corrupts the species, causes downfall of the soul; (5) the Good Samaritan of Luke 10 fits the Marqah words. It is not right for any Priest or judge to pass by the sojourner.

The Samaritan holds a cosmic view of God and the world. He is representative of God in the world. The Marqah agrees with Jesus' sermon on the mount except for describing God as "father."

By Jesus' day the Samaritans held one third of Palestine, located between Judea and Galilee, and had very bitter relations with the Jews. The Talmud records acts of courtesy towards a Jewish rabbi by the Samaritans. A definite break between the two sects came about 200 B.C. when the Jews added the prophets to their canon of Scriptures. The Samaritans came into their own during the Maccabean period.

The Samaritan "dog" really had love for fellowpersons and a genuine heart of compassion. The Good Samaritan might have repaid the wounded Jew, insult with insult, hate with hate, but he didn't. He had good sense. Compassion moved him to bandage the beaten man's wounds, possibly with strips torn from his own garment thus putting himself into the healing process. Luke uses medical terms of that day such as olive oil and wine. He took the man he didn't know to the inn and spent money on him. He becomes a restorer. Samaritanism reads like a half-way point between Judaism and Christianity. The Samaritan Christology is its doctrine of Moses. Both Moses and Jesus are proclaimed to be the "way" and both have "stilled" the sea.

ἰδών ---see, behold, seeing as sense-perception, eye-witness, seeing implies being there, participating, to grasp, to consider, to have insight, to experience. The eyewitness account of what was to be seen and

described as visible. In the text, it is a 2nd aorist participle, "having seen." The action which it denoted is represented as going on at the same time as the action of the leading verb "going down" or "on journey" or "passed that way." It is active voice because it represents the person as doing something, not as having something done to him. The attributive position means "the-seeing-priest passed on the other side." The action of seeing is prior to the action of by-passing. New English Dictionary uses the phrase to see in one's mind's eye, or to imagine or to contemplate the possibility. It means to see with awareness. Often seeing and hearing together constitute the totality of sensual and spiritual perception: eye-witness personal experience and individual certainty.

Ποιήσας ἔλεος ---show mercy, do mercy. Bultmann in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament describes it as the emotion aroused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else. It is the concern with the welfare of others. The elements of awe and mercy are included. In the New Testament, this term is often used for the divinely required attitude of person to person; the kindness we owe to one another. In Matt. 23:23, it is used in accusation against the Scribes and Pharisees. There is a mercy that is concerned with the eternal welfare of others. It describes the act of the Samaritan in showing love and acting with mercy. He is referred to as the showing-mercy-man, or the-one-showing-the-mercy. The Jewish Encyclopedia describes the term as the deep affection by which one person feels closely drawn to another and impelled to give up much, or do much, for him without regard of self. Love should be perfectly unselfish, and regulate the conduct of man toward man. God's name YHWH designates His mercy. The Encyclopaedia Judaica (1971) defines mercy as the feeling of compassion tempered with love, which engenders forgiveness and forbearance and which stimulates to deeds of charity and kindness. God is merciful, therefore, you should be merciful. Hosea was the first Hebrew prophet to emphasize mercy.

ἑσπλαγχνίσθη ---compassion, feel sympathy with or for someone. It is a verb form of σπλαγχνόν which means inward parts, seat of emotions, the heart or the soul. The heart goes out to...in affection and sympathy. It is having compassion for someone. In this text, it is 1st aorist passive indicative meaning he was compassionated.

This concept cannot be adequately translated because the English word is a noun but this Greek word is a verb. It means that the Samaritan was vibrating with compassion. His whole being entered into the compassion: soul, mind, body, senses, muscle flexes, etc. Compassion is a total-being emotion. The English verb form is "he was compassionate" which involves his whole self in the compassioning process. It includes deep mental and emotional process of "feel for," "weep for," "have one's heart bleed for," "melt the heart," "take pity upon," "have mercy on." Compassion can't happen without involvement of the soul, which is the psyche or the life. The Hebrew word for compassion is from the root meaning womb to express the meaning of brotherly feeling of those born from the same womb. The Jews were popularly called "compassionate scions of compassionate forebears."

Deuteronomy 49 commands that "just as God is called compassionate and gracious, so you must be compassionate and gracious, giving gifts freely." Compassion is the sorrow and pity for one in distress, creating a desire to relieve. It is a feeling ascribed alike to man and God. The Samaritan has feeling of sorrow for the wounded man and acts as God would act to restore that man. I Samuel 23:21 states that his feeling should mark the conduct of person to person. It is the foundation of the ethical and theological teachings of the Rabbis. The Priest and Levite should have learned and practiced daily having compassion. The Jewish Encyclopedia describes the seat of compassion as sympathetic emotions in the bowels. The eyes were credited with the function of indicating them. Therefore, the expression "the eye has" or "has not" pity is frequently used. This example story shows that the Christian's compassion is for all persons. It is not spontaneous, but rather a duty and a commandment. It is a Christian's proof of love for God. It is also the means by which God's own love may reach the world. Compassion is the chief quality or attribute of ideal character. Its Old Testament commandments serve as the introductory dialogue (between Jesus and lawyer) to this example story.

ἐπεμελήθη ---the 1st aorist passive indicative verb from the noun form meaning care, attention. It means to take care of a person. The Samaritan traveler took care of the wounded man. He adopted to himself the man's condition; the man's brokenness. It expresses the challenge of taking a broken (dying) man as he was

found and restoring him to (health) his normal self. In v. 35, the Samaritan said *ἔπεμελήθητι* (aorist passive imperative mood) to the innkeeper; you (understood) take care of him. It is an order or command. Imperative moods are used for commands. It refers to the action without saying anything about its duration or repetition; i.e., an open end command of caring. The Samaritan assures that the innkeeper will be adequately paid for this caring act. The Samaritan continues to accept responsibility for the wounded man and is paying the innkeeper to complete the restoring process.

πλησίον ---near, close by. Without the article it means who is the one near me, close by, or fellow person. The Old Testament usage refers to having dealings with someone, like an associate or a companion. It describes the relationship with members of the covenant who worship one God and who understand his commands (Israelites and full proselytes), whereas, Samaritans, foreigners, resident aliens who do not join the community of Israel within twelve months are excluded. In Matt. 5:43-48, Jesus accused them of loving their compatriots and not loving their personal enemy; but, Jesus demands love of enemies. Love should burst forth with irresistible force and go to work. The Good Samaritan is a classical witness of Jesus' interpretation of neighbor. This example story shows that one cannot say in advance who the neighbor will be, but that the course of life will make it plain enough. The questioner is to respond as the Samaritan did. One's neighbor cannot be defined. One can only "be" a neighbor. It is in the universalizing of the concept of neighbor that Jesus brought a new meaning to the ancient command.

ὁδεύων ---journey, travel. The Samaritan was on his journey (his travels). Journeys were frequent in the history of Israel and her neighbors. Four to eight hours of walk per day was the manner in which people measured the distance of their travels in Old and New Testament times. Jesus spent his 3-year ministry in travels and referred to himself as "the way."

κατέδησεν ---to bind up or bandage something. It is 1st aorist in the text which means direct action, "he bandaged," a simple past tense.

τραύματα ---transliterated into English in the word trauma, it means wounds, Here it is in the vocative case of direct address. "He directly applied bandages to the wound."

ἐλαίον ---olive oil. Oil is a means of treating wounds. It is found from the time of Homer and also in papyrus and LXX. Olive oil was used as a means to heal the most diverse maladies. A sick person was allowed to be rubbed on the Sabbath with a mixture of oil and wine.

οἶνον---wine. Both oil and wine are in the accusative case as objects of the intensive verb. Wine was used on wounds as an antiseptic.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN RETOLD

V. 29 A legal expert of the Mosaic law who had a strong desire to do justice to himself said to Jesus, "who is my neighbor...the one near to me...I want to know my obligation as stated in the Torah."

V. 30 Jesus made this reply to him, "a man (possibly a Jewish merchant with either money or valuable merchandise) was on his journey going (from Jerusalem, where the story was being told) down the treacherous wilderness road to Jericho (an important city of trade and residence), and he fell among robbers who saw him coming from their vantage point within a cave among the roadside limestone cliffs, and recognized him as a man with valuable possessions. These robbers were doing what has often been done on this most desolate and dangerous 17-mile stretch of road which is known as "bloody pass." The man was helpless as the

robbers stripped him of money, valuables and even his cloaks. Then, they beat him in the process, thus wounding him to the point where he is half-dead. The robbers, finished with their dastardly deed, leave the man beside the road to complete the process of dying.

V. 31 By coincidence...the falling of one event with another...because there was very little traffic on that road, and because the one appearing on the scene is a Priest whose professional work is to exemplify the Torah in showing mercy and compassion and being God's helper in the world...a Priest was going down that road. "Going down" informs of the fact that the Priest had completed his 8-day shift of service in the Jerusalem temple (purity laws may not have been in effect) and was on his way home to Jericho to rest. Usually, Priests traveled in groups, but for the sake of Jesus' story this Priest was alone, perhaps that is why he came by coincidence...he was separated from his travel group. "And when he saw the wounded half-dead man"...the Priest had a sense-perception (eye witness), a participating insight into wounded man's desperate condition. The Priest was totally aware of the man...the Torah commands...and the extent of his own concern. The Priest rejects the confrontation. He makes a decision of non-involvement. He refuses to be compassionate and do mercy...misses his opportunity. His decision comes from the inner-being. "He crosses over to the opposite

side of the road and passes by." It is total rejection. The wounded man probably thought to himself, "what more could I expect out of the religious leaders we have today." The Priest does sacrifices, but refuses mercy. He omitted the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith. V. 33 "And so likewise, a Levite"...this religious layman ought to help, but probably, he has no more compassion than the Priest. "When he came to the place, saw"...he, too, makes the confrontation of eye and understanding contact. He, too, rejects and refuses to do mercy. Therefore, likewise, the Levite, in total rejection, "crosses over to other side and passes by."

V. 34 "But a Samaritan"...we expected the third traveler to be a Jewish person...one of the people of the land who like to expose the disliked Priests. But instead, Jesus selects a Samaritan (of all people) to be this vital third traveler. The Samaritan is "on his travels"...direction is uncertain, but possibly the same as the others in the story..."down to Jericho." The Samaritan "came upon him"...at that spot..."and saw." The Samaritan, who has also been trained in Torah law, participates in the same confrontation as the Priest and Levite. He, too, has a sense-perception and insight into the wounded man's desperate condition. He is receiver, also, of a total awareness experience. The wounded man awaits for a decision, but has little hope of help since he, a Jew, notices that the man

being confronted is a Samaritan. The wounded man is thinking about the many times that he, himself, has been mean to Samaritans and what more can he expect now. But the Samaritan is "seeing with compassion." It is the deep feeling of sympathy which originates out of the very seat of the emotions. His insight confrontation with the wounded man's desperate need and helpless condition, like an electric shock, goes to the Samaritan's $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$, soul or psyche, and there it generates feelings of compassion and actions of mercy. The total being is involved in the verbs---saw, feeling compassion, and doing mercy. The Samaritan was not hardened by all the negative influences upon him. His actions are carefully, but forcefully described.

V. 34 "and came," which is opposite action of Priest and Levite who passed by on other side. The Samaritan's action involved the kneeling down beside the half-dead man.

"Bandaged-up"...probably tearing strips from his own cloak ... "his wounds." The Samaritan reaches for his juglets of olive oil and wine which is the survival kit carried by travelers. Compassion is happening as "the oil"...with healing properties..."and the wine"...with antiseptic action..."are poured" over the wounded areas. The Samaritan could well have ended his duty there, but he didn't. The action of mercy continues as "on his own animal, he mounts" the half-dead men. Now the animal and the man are being "led to the inn" where he continues to "take

care of the man." This means bedding-down, feeding, and re-dressing the wounds. The Good Samaritan is accepting full responsibility for the man and is determined to restore him to the health condition before the robbers injured and took half of his life away. The Samaritan is a restorer.

V. 35 "Next morning the Samaritan pays the innkeeper two denarii"...now he is accepting even the financial responsibility for the man who was robbed and has no resources left. Compassion leads to total involvement. The Samaritan still refuses to let go of compassion's responsibility, but commands the innkeeper to "take care of him, and whatever you spend in addition, when I return (from my business journey to Jericho) I will pay back." Here, he is accepting the on-going obligations of compassion. Mercy continues until the restoration job is completed and the man is whole. The example story ends when the Samaritan finishes doing mercy.

V. 36 Jesus puts the supreme question to the lawyer, but it is the reversal of the lawyer's own question to Jesus. "Which of these three, do you think, is (has acted as) neighbor to the one who fell among robbers?" The "ball" is now thrown back to the legal expert of the Mosaic laws. How will he answer? The example story creates a confrontation situation in him. Will he get in-touch with his own deep feelings? Being a professional man himself,

(lawyer) will he yield to the pressure of loyalty to his own religious professionals and fellow countrymen, by answering in favor of the Priest and Levite? Will the example-confrontation reach into the very ψυχή (soul) of his being---the seat of his feelings---and arouse compassion which will cause him to answer in truth...although it favors his arch-enemy, the Samaritan. His answer is anxiously awaited. It could be the answer that would change the lawyer's life. The answer involves more than a mental examination of passing judgment on a lawyer's brief.

V. 37 The straight forward answer "the one doing mercy upon him" is right. The lawyer speaks the truth. He answers as one who understands and accepts the premise of the example story. Jesus is quick to congratulate him on the answer. But Jesus congratulates by means of a command, "Go, and do likewise." What Jesus is really saying is "yes, you spoke correctly, if you really believe your answer, then prove it (that your life is now changed) by going out, and wherever you go, do likewise." Live your answer. The real proof is in the living.

Chapter 3

THEOLOGICAL MOTIF

The Good Samaritan Example Story makes Jesus a living contemporary. It admonishes and edifies the church in every generation. Preaching and teaching can be done from its many viewpoints: the Samaritan; the Priest and Levite (the "in group"); the wounded man; the lawyer; and even the innkeeper. It is impossible to exhaust the meaning in a few sermons or teaching events.

The decision setting is the climax. Jesus used the story to communicate his own understanding of the meaning of neighbor to the lawyer. It is a decision story. After the example is well-told, Jesus "tosses the ball" to the lawyer. He must make his decision. However, it is left uncertain, after correctly answering, whether the lawyer changes his Jewish way of seeing "neighbor" and accepts this new meaning. The lawyer's searching introductory question is "what are the limits of my neighborly responsibility?" He answers his own question, "none," after Jesus' effective teaching event.

PERSONAL RELATIONS

Personal relations within the community is the subject of Luke's many accounts of Jesus' teaching genre. The merciful Samaritan indicts forever the complacent

selfishness of the socially and ecclesiastically exalted. Jesus used many of the conventional relations of the people in his time for the teaching of ideal relations in the new ethical community.

The victim is present throughout the story. He gives shape to the plot. Victims are always present in society. The pace and conditions of the present life situation create many victims. This is a victim-prone world. There is no shortage of objects for compassion and acts of mercy.

THE WAY OF LIFE

This story is presented by Jesus as a direction for the way of life. He gave an example that urges love to all persons. It points out the nature of the new life and the way it may be attained. The self-centered, self-satisfied life is condemned. The point is that compassion is better than sacrifice (symbolized by the Priest and Levite)... just like human need (plucking grain) is more important than the keeping of the Sabbath law (Mark 2:23-27).

LOVE

Love is the law of life under the reign of God. It is expressed not merely in feelings and words, but also in actions: capacity to give (Matt. 5:42); readiness to serve (Mark 10:42-45, Luke 22:24-27); works of love (Matt.

25:31-46). A characteristic of love is its boundlessness, not just to social equals, but with preference for the poor.¹ Christian love means a genuine concern for the welfare of others. It does not necessarily involve either affection or admiration. Jesus illustrates love as involving forgiveness; a willingness to accept persons who are often unacceptable; an intention to care for those for whom no one usually cares. Christian love shares with both those who are lovable and those who are unlovable. It is a product of the will, therefore, it can be extended to enemies. It gives lavishly of itself without a demand for return on its investment.²

The capacity for love is the result of the divine love which has been received. Jesus lets God's demand be grounded in the reality of God's loving action. All of the six hundred thirteen laws can be summed-up in love to God and love to neighbor (as to yourself). Jesus named all that a person must do in the sight of God. If love for one's neighbor grows out of the encounter with God's love, then it cannot be separated from God's love and knows no limit. Jesus connects man's action with the

¹Joachim Jeremias, New Testament Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 213.

²Gary Wilson, "An Acts Motif in Theology and Worship: Exegesis and Application of Acts 14:8-20" (an unpublished dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1974), p. 77.

promise of the Kingdom of God.

The love of neighbor is presented by Jesus as a violent confrontation with another person in desperate need whose very life may be at stake. He does not say that this will automatically result in love for God, not that the love of God merges into love of our neighbor.

A love which in this sense does not really love the other person for his own sake but only for the sake of God is not real love. An example is the love of his neighbor in the story of the Good Samaritan. The help that Samaritan renders to him who has fallen among the thieves is given solely in response to the other's need. This is told with the greatest care: he binds up his wounds, he alleviates his pain, sets the sick man on his beast, brings him to the inn, puts him into the inn-keeper's care the next day, pays the initial expenses incurred when he comes again. Note how simply and without sentimentality the Samaritan is described: the shrewd merchant, practical and careful with his means and money, who does nothing that is not necessary at the time. In all this there is no parade at all of 'religion.' What he does is aimed at the sufferer without side glances at God. This is expressed incomparably well in the words of the judge of the world, who at the end of time judges those on his right and on his left according to what they have done unto the least of his brethren, and in complete ignorance³ as to their action's significance (Matt. 15:31ff).

The command of God requires one thing only---the existence in love. "Living in love" is something which happens to man in faith from God. The decisive element in love is to allow ourselves to be loved by God. Only when a person does this is it possible to love. It is a

³ "Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 110.

personal form of existence...it is the flowing forth of love. God demands only one thing: that we should live in love. Christ summons us to "live in love," or "remain in love." There is no other virtue alongside the life of love. The idea of virtue causes a person to justify oneself---this is the absolute opposite of all genuine goodness. It has been said that goodness is an act of modest extravagance and loving care.

We are always either loving or hating people---neutrality is a terrible form of hatred. The only possibility of not hating is to love, which is life itself in the hymn of praise to love in I Corinthians 13. It means being in community where life has the "thou." The "I" has been forced open to admit the "thou."⁴ "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar."⁵ Love sees the life of the other person as my life. In faith the other person is known and recognized as a fellow member in the body. It is not merely a matter of the reason, but of the heart...the center of the personality.⁶ God does more than respect us, He loves us. Whoever, through faith, has a share in God's will does not merely respect one's or

⁴Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 320.

⁵I John 4:20.

⁶Brunner, p. 322.

his/her neighbor, but loves this neighbor. The characteristic sign of love is sympathy, the experience of feeling the other person as "a bit of myself." The first effect of love is to overcome antipathy and emotional indifference. Both are caused by "I" being cut off from contact with the "other." Love desires to see the loved one happy and to banish unhappiness. Genuine sympathy issues in active helpfulness. It shows itself in ability to listen and receive encounter with need. The egoist can't do this. Love listens and accepts. It wishes to "see things from the others' point of view."⁷ It may be argued that the wounded man was helpless to reject aid from the Samaritan. However, it is highly possible that the Samaritan's love in giving aid did arouse a response of love from the victim so that he was able to receive and accept love. The Priest and Levite didn't give the wounded man an opportunity or occasion to respond to love. The surest sign of love is my acceptance of the other person...the attitude that does not pull people up, or demand, or resist. "The Christian ethics' distinctive mark is passive love, self-sacrificing surrender which is psychologically the highest activity. It does not pick and choose."⁸ The sole meaning of a Christian ethic is that in every concrete problem with

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

which we are confronted we must never forget the reality of the world beyond and its action upon us. Brunner states that:

the believer's most important duty is to always pour the vitality of love into the rigid forms of daily life. The one thing that matters is, what can be done out of faith, to love our neighbor "through Christ" and to serve him as our brother in any way we can whether within our fellowship, or outside it, or in spite of it.⁹

NEIGHBOR

Service is the outward action of love. God does not desire something from us, He desires us, ourselves, our personality, our will, our heart. He desires to possess us for His service which is the sum total of all good conduct. It is emphatically stated by Brunner:

God summons us to serve Him and therefore to serve His world...no action should be directed toward ourselves. There is no Christian service of self. Service means going out of oneself. "He who loses his life shall find it," Matt. 16:25. It is never the will of God that we should serve Him in any other way than in loving our neighbor; but we have to inquire of Him constantly what this loving actually means, expressed in concrete terms. The Christian is never called to act on general principles, but always in accordance with the concrete commandment of love.¹⁰

God has inaugurated a new line of action in view of the coming Kingdom of God. We are to do what our hand finds to do in relation to those with whom we come into contact.

⁹Ibid., p. 328.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 192.

There is no way to tell beforehand what we ought to do. It can be learned only from our neighbor through listening and seeing. The neighbor is the work of God and the property of God. It is our duty to preserve and develop our neighbor's life according to our knowledge and ability. It is our duty to serve in accordance with the neighbor's existence as a human being and the growth of human life.¹¹

RESTORATION

The will of God is presented by Jesus as the restoration of a broken man. This is more important than doing the letter of the law as by Priest and Levite. Bornkamm¹² writes that the laws of Judaism are made by God and were not to be ranked first, second, etc. Therefore, this is not a natural question for a Jew to ask. But Jesus did this anyway to show divine will which needs to be understood and followed. To emphasize the supremacy of the will of God and his teachings over the Torah, Jesus said, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."¹³ Doing the will of God finds an urgent theological force in love, mercy and compassion to whoever is hurting and in need of being restored, wherever that person may be confronted.

¹¹Ibid., p. 209.

¹²Bornkamm, p. 100.

¹³Matthew 9:13; 12:7.

The strong statements of Jesus are: "Do this and you will live!"¹⁴

Jesus (possibly Luke, or his source) places this story in a salvation setting. The lawyer's dialogue begins by a question about the way to eternal life (verse 25). Redemption is for those who are hurting (beaten); hopeless (can't make self well); victimized by demon earthly forces (robbers); without possibility of life (half-dead and dying); and must accept grace (unmerited favor). Salvation cannot come out of law and ritual (Priest and Levite), but out of love and compassion (Samaritan). The Savior (Jesus) like the Samaritan is the unexpected surprise entry to make salvation of God possible, and is the popular object of hate, suspicion, racist attitudes (such as: what can come out of Nazareth?), plots, doesn't fit their pre-conceived notions about religious life and eternal hope.

HUMAN WORTH

There is a new ethic of human worth in this text. All persons are to act as neighbors in the Kingdom of God by showing love and compassion. The old economy is gone, out of the picture, Priest and Levite pass by on other side and are now out of sight. It (Torah) was ineffective in

¹⁴Luke 10:28, 37.

dealing with human situations (faithfulness to ritual and law were more valuable than human life). It is now replaced by what God really intended from the very beginning (before the fall)---love and mercy. It is striking that of the two great commandments recited by the lawyer, Jesus chose to illustrate the love of neighbor over the love of God. That is due to the fact it is the more difficult concept for people to understand and put into effect. Jesus' forcefulness is felt in "Go, and do likewise."

CONFRONTATION

There seems to be a lack of the sense of guilt in this passage. Each actor makes decision (negative or positive) on the confrontation and follows through on the line of action. The precise action verbs possibly tell of a sense of satisfaction and meaning which the Samaritan is deriving from his decision. The fact of decision about love is very strong here. This is a decisive story. There is no possibility that any actor can ride the fence in indecision. The presence of the Kingdom of God and the Grace of Jesus requires a decision from everyone.

Hope and hopelessness are a prominent force here. Where is our hope from the position of the helpless man? Are we agents of hope, using our faith to reach out to others? Without hope there is no tomorrow...only despair. Hope really depends upon love, compassion, grace...without

them there is no hope.

This text is an example of behavior in response to a confrontation. Behavior depends upon decisions not conditions. The Samaritan acted in love and mercy under most unfavorable and unlikely conditions. Loving involvement is the basic way to spiritual, emotional, and mental vigor. Jesus says it is the "way to eternal life."

GRACE

This example story speaks strongly of grace. It is most probable that the man is a Jew. We are not told otherwise. Sitz im Leben would suggest that he most likely had engaged in acts of hate and violence against Samaritans wherever he found them. The exception would be if he were of the common people of the land. Now, he is beaten, stripped and left half-dead beside the road. There is no way that he can restore himself. The Torah (Priest and Levite) can't help him because that is a salvation by works of keeping laws (the laws actually work against this man's restoration) and this man is incapacitated...he can't do anything about his condition. His only chance is grace. He must accept grace, or die. He must accept the one who offers grace. He is surprised by grace and the one who brings the grace. This is truly a picture of amazing grace. The grace offered and accepted gives this text a salvation motif.

SOCIAL OUTREACH

Social outreach is non-existent to the Priest and Levite. The reason is not given for their aborted confrontation. Love and mercy ought to be a high priority in their profession. How could a law (in the name of God) be valid that permits nonchalance over agonizing death. Could it be that the Priest and Levite had personal emotional hangups that caused them to see sufferings and refuse help? Christ gave this example story to cause persons to diligently search their hearts and check their conduct. What the Samaritan does is what really matters. It calls for simple action when the need of a person is confronted. Jesus is changing the lawyer from seeing the world as controlled by law toward living a valid, authentic life.

Thielicke believes that the lawyer who asks the question belongs to the group who like to engage in endless arguments, because they know that this is the best way to keep the Lord at arm's length.¹⁵ However, the man was probably disturbed in conscience by Jesus' preaching that action is the way of life. "The enquirer's theological knowledge is of no avail if his life is not governed by

¹⁵ Helmut Thielicke, The Waiting Father (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 159.

love to God and to his neighbor."¹⁶ The text teaches that no one is outside the range of love in our way of life. It is both a challenge and a rebuke to those who piously draw within their religious shells and let the world about them disintegrate and die. Linnemann states:

this does not invalidate the interpretation of the world which the law gives us. Without such a traditional comprehension of the world we should not be able to live at all. But this interpretation of the challenge meets us henceforth as an authentic demand to which we have to take up an attitude ourselves and on our own. We can no longer hide behind the fact that something is commanded or not commanded. The question "what can be demanded of me?" can no longer be put in that way. What is really demanded is revealed in the situation, whether I am adequate for it, or afterwards realize that I have failed it. Simply to hold fast to what the legal demand requires (what anyone can require of me), is the same as to hide myself from the claim which the concrete situation addresses to me. By doing this man banishes himself to a world of silence, to a wilderness, that offers him nothing to live from, so that he is completely thrown upon his own resources.¹⁷

CREED VERSUS CONDUCT

Most of Jesus' teachings put social responsibility on his followers. Christians are the salt of the earth, and must not lose their savor. Jesus promised blessing for such humanitarian acts as giving a cup of cold water in His name. He spoke about visiting people in prison "Inasmuch

¹⁶ Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 202.

¹⁷ Eta Linnemann, Jesus of the Parables (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 55.

as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."¹⁸ Jesus never separated creed from conduct, or wordly duty from heavenly aspirations.¹⁹ The church that shows human kindness has always won the people of the world for the Lord. Missionaries have found that human kindness opens up homes and lives to the Gospel. Christ's emphasis here is that love does not ask, what claim has this person on me?; but, does this person need what I can do for him or her? Christ came to set us right with one another. Jesus said "this is my commandment, that you love one another."²⁰

Ayer pleads,

there is a life-and-death struggle going on in the world today, and the church cannot---like the Priest and the Levite 'pass by on the other side' in indifference. In many places the multitudes have fallen among thieves, have been severely beaten by prevailing conditions and 'left near death.' In the presence of this shall we merely sing pious hymns---thanking God that we are not as other men and pass the world's problems by---drunkenness, delinquency, vice, intolerance. Shall we be satisfied with an ivory-tower seclusion in our stained-glass sanctuaries, and forget the turmoil and strife outside needing the application of our 'salt of the earth.' Analyze this parable to discover its stern and searching teaching.²¹

¹⁸Matthew 25:40.

¹⁹William Ward Ayer, Christ's Parables for Today (New York: Revell, 1949), p. 49.

²⁰John 15:17;

²¹Ayer, p. 44.

Jesus measures each person's decisions and actions by what is revealed, demanded and possible in real life. A person's actions are to be determined by the real life needs which are seen. The idea of God "not one sparrow is forgotten before God"²² is the basic purpose of this example story. What the Samaritan does is what matters--- a real encounter with the world. When we fail with the needs of the world, keeping of the precepts won't save us.

INTERCESSION

Through the intercession of persons, God brings his loving help to others in his world. The universalism brought into the picture shows God's concern for the whole world not just for one race. The great miracle of life is the everyday giving of mercy. There is no weakness in mercy; this story recovers the strong affirmation of its power. There is no hint of rewards here---the Samaritan is not trying to earn his way into the Kingdom. He portrays the warmth of spiritual power.

RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

There is present in this text a comparison of responsible and irresponsible behavior; of feeling and behavior; confrontation and competent response to others.

²²Luke 12:6.

It is easier to control behavior than thinking or feeling. However, feelings are tied to everything a person does. It is important to be aware of what we actually do. Many persons believe in much more grace, love and mercy, than they "go and do." Two concepts stand out in this text: Actualized Discipleship and Realized Discipleship. Value judgments by all the persons in the parable including the beaten man are crucial. The value judgment by the man allowing a Samaritan to restore him could possibly result in his living as a restored person, but also as an outcast from his family and friends (being helped by a Samaritan). Each person must judge his/her own behavior and evaluate his/her own actions. The Priest/Levite are committed to one life-plan while the Samaritan is committed to another. The commitment is a vow (conscious or unconscious) that a person makes which affects (positively or adversely) his or her life and behavior.

Good conduct is based upon the will of God flowing through personal existence and happening in personal service to others. The intentionality of love results in right conduct. Although a life may be determined by the will of God, a person is a situation. The problem of right conduct belongs to human existence, if we deny this we distort the picture of human life. "Man only knows what the love of God is when he sees the way in which God acts, and he only knows how he ought to love by allowing himself

to be drawn by faith into this activity of God."²³ Human conduct is good only when God acts in it through the Holy Spirit. It must be set within the action of God. Brunner warns:

man's self-chosen emancipation is really his rebellious breaking away from his creator. But man is not only severed from God and from his original nature, but his attitude towards the world and to his fellowman is also perverted. His co-existence with others has been destroyed. The two direct results of this fundamental perversion of man's nature are self-seeking and love of the world. The Good Samaritan acts in harmony with God, in fact he acts in God's behalf. Whereas, the Priests & Levite act out of a perverted attitude toward fellow-man.²⁴

The sense of responsibility is never neutral. Awareness of responsibility is either along the negative path of the voice of conscience or along the positive path of faith. Faith is the corrector of conscience. In faith all isolation ceases. The desire for the world ceases and life directed towards the world in service begins. In other words, a person is free "from" the world "for" the world. To use the expression of Kierkegaard, faith is passion... a passionate interest. The new way of life means responsible existence. Therefore, before the good can be done the agent must be good.

²³Brunner, p. 83.

²⁴Ibid., p. 154.

SOUL AS SOURCE OF COMPASSION

Compassion comes from the most unusual and unexpected source...a despised religious half-breed. Mercy has no pedigree. It exudes from the soul of anyone. This example story has a deeper level---ψυχή---which results in surface actions (out of the heart). The victim's miserable situation does not cause the Priest of Levite to help him. The situation does not cause the Samaritan to do mercy. The Samaritan's compassion causes his action. Via calls it "psychological causality."²⁵ Persons do not cause God to be gracious and merciful. God is mercy.

The one significant problem in this example story is what it doesn't describe. The crucial point is the human area between confrontation ἰδών (seeing) and the reaction ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος (doing of mercy). Where, within the human being is the source, or origin, of compassion? What affects compassion positively into action and doing mercy, or negatively into indifference? This inner human area is not described in this passage (just as miracle stories omit the descriptive moment of the miracle's happening), but that doesn't mean that there is no inner being. In fact, without it there is no explanation of why

²⁵ Dan Otto Via, Jr., "Parable and Example Story: A Literary Structuralist Approach," Semeia, I (1974), 116.

Priest and Levite rejected confrontation, nor why the Samaritan accepted confrontation and performed his heroic act.

PSYCHE

The seat of the feelings (compassion) and desires is the ψυχή which means "soul" or "breath of life." A Christian letter advises "I exhort you, my lord, not to put grief into your soul and ruin your fortunes."²⁶ The term ψυχή in New Testament means the vital breath through which the body lives and feels, i.e., the principle of life manifested in the breath. The soul is a vital principle and the seat of the senses, desires, affections, appetites, passions---the lower animal nature and the higher rational nature. It often is ascribed to the soul, the seat of desires, affections and appetites, that which belongs strictly to the person.

There is an interrelatedness of the physical, psychological, and spiritual in us. It is called the total person. This is the only way to look at the cause and the solution of Christian problems. Epict. 3,22,18 states "with all my soul (heart)." The soul is the sense of a person (Ex. 12:4, Lev. 2:1, Deut. 10:22, Matt. 1:2, 38,

²⁶ James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 698.

Acts 2:41, 43; 27:37)). The Greek word $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ means psyche, soul, or butterfly.

The Samaritan's being or Psyche is a witness to the Christian way of life. Webster's unabridged dictionary describes this term as life, soul, mind, mental process, and spiritual process or activity. It is the totality of the id, ego, and superego---a psychosomatic unity. It is the mind (disposition) as denoting the affections (Matt. 12:18, 22:37; Acts 4:32, 14:2). It is the human person (Acts 2:41, 43; 3:23; 7:14; 27:37; Rom. 8:1; I Peter 3:20).

Whatever a person feeds into the $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ (psyche), including early childhood experience, religious values, lack of religious training, personal hang-up, nature (stable or unstable), wounding or haughty experiences, does affect that person's interpretation and reaction to situations. Deep inner resentments cause one to act with hate and negativism, whereas, a person with self-esteem and peace will act out of sensitive Compassion. Hirsch, writing in The Jewish Encyclopedia, states that

the physiological psychology of the Bible places the seat of the sympathetic emotions in the bowels. But the eyes were credited with the function of indicating them. Hence the frequent use of the expression 'the eye has' or 'the eye has not' pity.²⁷

²⁷ Emil G., Hirsch, "Compassion," The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnall, 1903), p. 202.

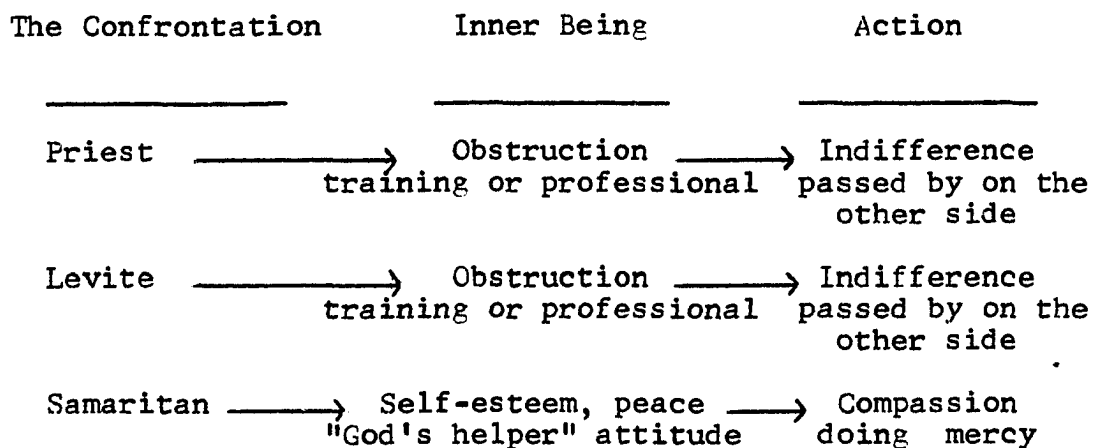
The Priest and Levite by training and profession were rigid legalists, and firm advocates of the law (Torah) and order (sacrifices). Their ψυχή (soul) was set on the rhythmic keeping of ordinances without skipping a beat. Therefore, the confrontation ἰδών (seeing) with the wounded man did not send forth out of their souls (psyche) the feelings of compassion, because they had been trained to respond only to legal precepts, not the seeing of personal needs. Their inner beings allowed them to unfeelingly pass by on the other side without any feeling of remorse. After all, the victim beside the road was just one of the "people of the land."

The Samaritan is a much different case. He understood the Torah in human terms. Each person is valuable in the sight of God. He was reminded of his spiritual ancestor, David, who wrote "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, yet Thou didst make him a little lower than the angels."²⁸ The Good Samaritan acts calmly but with deliberate deeds of mercy as one who is at peace with himself and his surrounding. He is in touch with his deep inner feelings. He has dealt with life's problems in a wholesome, spiritual, and psychological manner. When he is confronted with a wounded, half-dead, victim, the input does not meet

²⁸Psalm 8:4, 5.

any resistance in his $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$. He has a healthy emotional and spiritual life. Instead, it freely aroused feelings of compassion, love, and desire to be ordainer restoring the man; and helper in applying the healing acts. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."²⁹ Jesus said, "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks."³⁰ Peter writes, "the hidden man of the heart."³¹ As the Good Samaritan thought in his heart, so was he. Love and mercy come out of the soul, but the eyes confront the opportunity of spiritual responsibility.

THE CONFRONTATION-ACTION MODEL



²⁹Proverbs 4:23.

³⁰Matthew 12:34.

³¹I Peter 3:4.

Chapter 4

THE SERMON: "SAYING IT WITH CARE"

May the power of the Holy Spirit move in and through our very being as we listen to the drama of this great passage of Scripture. May we open our hearts in dialogue with these characters of the narrative.

Our passage (Luke 10:25-37) asks some penetrating questions. Let us hear and respond to them as we carry on our conversation with the text.

A legal expert of the Jewish law came to confront Jesus with a question, to test him. In those days, there were many traveling rabbis with disciples. Their teachings had to be tested. However, this lawyer may have been hired by the High Priest to trap Jesus. He asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He is testing Jesus with a very pious concern. Either he is pretending, or he is truly searching for eternal life.

The Greek word for lawyer means legal expert of the Mosaic law. This man was an authority on the commandments. He knew all of the six hundred thirteen (613) laws. He was able to answer questions. He was the instructor of the Torah, the law. This lawyer comes to Jesus asking his opinion. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus responds with another question: What do the commandments say about that subject? The legal expert

answers back immediately by quoting the two great commandments, one from Deuteronomy and the other from Leviticus. Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus congratulated him and said, you are right; you answered correctly. Now, go and do this. But the lawyer, in an attempt to justify himself asked the most crucial question: who is my neighbor? Who is to receive my definite, practical love? I don't know who my neighbor is. You see, I can't help everybody; that's an impossible task. I don't know whom I should be caring for; Jesus, please define it for me. Love my neighbor; how can I grab hold of a term like that? Neighbor is such a nebulous concept. I need some boundaries around it.

What kind of limitations do you and I place on the concept of neighborliness? The lawyer was seeking to make it easy on himself. The definition of my neighbor, the boundaries on my love; this presents us with a big confusing problem. He may have been really searching for an answer to a troublesome problem.

Or, perhaps he was just engaging in endless argument, as Scribes and Pharisees enjoy doing. Arguments provide a buffer zone between the person and reality. As long as an issue is unsettled, there is no pressing need to make a decision about it. There is no necessity of taking action if we endlessly continue the argument. It is argumentation that keeps us from really making a decision

for Christ. We keep a safe zone between us so that we can play both sides. Honestly, we do this much too often.

It could be the lawyer felt that Jesus was radiating God. An inner voice was crying out to know more about Jesus and his new Kingdom. The question may have been an attempt to satisfy his own deep inner longing for life eternal.

Where is the meaning in life? Where is the purpose of living? How can I love my neighbor? How can I sort out my neighbor from among all those people out there? How would you feel if you were that lawyer, asking that question of Jesus?

Jesus answered him: "Don't worry about that, you're asking the wrong question. It is not who is your neighbor. The real question is the last question in this passage. How can you be a neighbor whenever you see human need?" This legal expert had trouble understanding what Jesus meant. He had question marks all over his face. So Jesus told an example story to explain just what a neighbor does. So Jesus removed all doubt.

How would it feel if you were that man, the Jewish merchant, going from Jerusalem down to Jericho? You're on a business trip, walking on this 17-mile stretch of treacherous, desolate, hot road bordered with rugged limestone cliffs and caves. Suddenly some men leap wildly at you from a cave. They rob, strip and beat you. How does it

feel to be deeply wounded, hurting, life ebbing out, lying there beside the road? You have no strength to help yourself. It is a lonely place; not much traffic; you can't expect any help. You feel terribly hopeless. There is no chance. You give up and resign yourself that it will soon be all over.

There is a sound, but maybe just in your imagination. Now you hear footsteps on the graveled roadway. You have strength enough partly to open one eye and see a man. It is a coincidence that at your most desperate point of need, someone appears. It's a Priest. He is coming down from serving in the temple. (He usually served an 8-day shift at the temple in Jerusalem. When off duty, Priests go down to their homes in Jericho, a warmer and drier climate.) The scene we've been describing is the Priest on homeward route. He looks, sees you deeply wounded and helpless.

You think, "how wonderful to have a man of God come at this time; it is a coincidence!" The Priest may have preached a sermon that week about loving your neighbor. You have some hope, now. The Priest sees you. The Greek word for see is *ἰδών* which means seeing with confrontation in a way that you must make up your mind what you will do about the situation. A decision must be made. The confrontation must be answered with a decision. The Priest looks at the wounded victim and thinks "shall I help, or

shall I not?" But he doesn't find it in his heart to respond. The Priest makes a negative decision and passes by on other side of the road.

How does it feel as you watch him make a wide turn around you? The pain bites deeper into the wounds. The hopeless feelings become more overwhelming. But you gather enough strength to mutter, "that's the way it is, Priests never care about anybody." That was the feeling in the land those days, most of the people never went to church. Those outside the church usually had a dim view of what went on inside the church. They were turned off by the religion of that day because those who belonged to it never really practiced it. The crowds were following Jesus because they felt he cared. So the Priest goes on down the road.

Another man appears on his travels. Maybe he will help. He is a Levite, a lay associate at the temple. He does the temple chores, and assists the Priests. He is a devout Jewish layman. He sees you there in the ditch. He makes his decision and passes around on the other side. He refuses to get involved. The Levite gives up the responsibilities involved with confrontation.

The pains are getting worse. It is miserable there in the ditch. Strength and life are ebbing away.

Here comes a third man. You have just strength enough to open your eyes and see that he is a Samaritan.

You despise Samaritans. You would never speak to one. They are half-breed foreigners and they don't believe as we do. As desperate as you are, you almost hope he will go on by. He won't help me anyway. He doesn't like me and I don't like him. We've been taught that way. We've had many sad encounters. I remember him. I've seen him in the streets of Jerusalem. At the same time, I am not in a very good position just now to bear him a grudge.

The Samaritan sees you now. He sees your sad condition. He has feeling in his eyes. The eyes of the Priest and Levite were cold and rejecting, but this Samaritan has warm, caring eyes. He answers the confrontation of your desperate condition with a compassionate decision. Here he comes. He crosses over to your side of the road. He kneels down and says some words of comfort. Now, he is tearing strips from his own garment, as though he were putting himself into the healing process. He bandages up your wounds where you've been beaten. You notice the compassionate way that he works with you. He continues to do mercy by taking the juglets of olive oil and wine from his side. He pours the oil to soothe and heal, and now he pours the wine as an antiseptic to kill germs and make the wound clean.

You look into his face and see his expression of love, compassion and forgiveness as he continues to work over you. You make a feeble sigh, "thank you, kind sir.

But, why do you care for me?"

The Samaritan is not yet finished. He lifts you up. What is he going to do now? He puts you on his own beast. You ask, what are you doing with me? I hurt all over. The kind man answers in comforting words, "I'm taking you to the inn on down the road and I shall get a room for you." He walks, leading his beast with you upon it. We could see how it would feel if we were that victim going down that roadway when only a few minutes before everything seemed hopeless. You look at the man who is restoring you, and feel warm love and appreciation for his mercy.

There is the inn, around the bend. The good Samaritan takes hold of you gently, lifts you off his beast, carries you in, and settles you in a nice clean bed. He prepares an evening meal and helps you eat for your nourishment and strength. He makes his bed next to yours so he can care for you through the night. In the morning, he re-dresses your wounds. You hear him approach the innkeeper's desk and hand him coins with the words "take care and see that the wounded man is restored to himself. When I return from Jericho, I will stop and pay you whatever else it costs." That Samaritan is taking the full responsibility for you upon himself.

This must have been a tremendous experience for you because you know the enmity between Samaritans and Jews. The Samaritan scriptures consisted only of the laws of

Moses, but they took seriously the portion that emphasized being good to your neighbor and the so-journer. Their interpretation was that the traveler in trouble should never be deserted. This is an important manner of showing the love of God wherever you go.

A beatitude could be formed out of this story: Blessed are those wounded (traumatics) travelers, beaten and robbed, because now there are christians to do acts of compassion to them.

The Samaritan does mercy to you. Now you know what it feels like to experience the mercy of God. If this Samaritan is a representative of God's love, how great it is to have God notice us when we hurt and restore us by the power of His love. He cares when others pass us by. God shows us mercy and soothes our wounds.

But, that is not the point of the story. This narrative was spoken to cause us to think, to search our heart, to check our conduct. God is asking us to be His good Samaritans in His world. He wants to be compassionate to the world through us. He wants to do mercy to the world through us.

Jesus point-blank asked the lawyer who of these three acted as a neighbor. The lawyer answered honestly, "the one doing mercy." How does it feel to have mercy done to you? How would it feel to do mercy to someone else? Someone you don't like?

We say that we are Christian, but Jesus is asking here; "do you act like a Christian?" Jesus is telling us that neighborliness is one of the very important tenets of the Christian creed. Showing mercy to others is the way God acts and Christians are to act in this world as God acts. That is a special ordination given to everyone of us, that we can act as God acts in the world. God wants us to show his love and mercy to all "other" people. This is the work he has given us. It is exciting to do that. How did it feel, as you lay wounded in the ditch with life ebbing away, to have religious persons pass by, ignoring your condition? How did it feel when someone you've been taught to hate actually stopped and became your restorer?

I wonder, that evening when the Priest and Levite arrived in Jericho, how they felt about it all? I wonder what kind of night they had? Were they restless and thinking..."I should have helped the poor fellow...I wonder what has happened to him?" Did their consciences bother them? I wonder how they felt?

I wonder what kind of night the Samaritan had...as he laid his head on the pillow and breathed a deep prayer of compassion for the poor victim? "Lord, help this poor man...take care of him...help him, Lord...heal his wounds... he is your creation...you love him...take care of him... Amen."

There is no greater excitement that you and I can

experience on this earth than to be a channel through which God works to help others. You and I have the privilege of translating the love of God to all the hurt people around the world...and there are a lot of them. Isn't that great! God lets us do that. He trusts us with such powerful emotions as compassion, love, mercy. He commissions us to do that!

Christ turned that lawyer's question of "How do I inherit eternal life" into a real social issue. "How do you act as a neighbor?" That's the real question, Mr. legal expert, "how do you act neighborly?" You'll make it to heaven, lawyer, if you spend your life receiving God's love and sharing the love with whomever you meet and wherever you go. If you are receiving God's love, you'll make it to heaven.

The man was thinking sublimely about heaven, but Jesus brought him back to earth with a lesson on neighborliness. Then Jesus ends with this challenging command: "Go, thou and do likewise."

The completely other-world attitude may be pious and devout, but vows to let the world take care of itself. It refuses to get entangled with earthly cares and needs. Since it is a sinful and mean world, I'll just pray, read my Bible and make it to heaven all by myself.

But that person is denying God's love and mercy to others. Jesus is denouncing that attitude in this example

story. That is exactly what the Priest and Levite did. They were oblivious to earthly conditions around them. That is why the people of the land rejected them and had no confidence in the religion of that day. The person who spends all day in personal devotion is not really doing the will of God. The Priests and Levites today are going to worship services and Bible studies but they are also failing to translate the impact of God's love into their everyday world.

God loves this world, whether you love it or not. God cares about every person in it. He loves our enemies and the persons we can't stand, as much as he loves us. No one in this world escapes his attention, love and mercy. He cares about the worst, the meanest, and the farthest-out persons.

The question Jesus is really asking is how can you and I be an avenue through which God can show that love to others? The only way that God can tell your neighbor "I love you" is through you. That is the only way they will know about it.

The lawyer had been rejecting confrontation to the needs around him and opportunities to show God's love. His only concern was getting into heaven. Jesus surprises him by saying, "mercy action is the way to eternal life!"

On the other side of the coin are persons who care nothing about eternal life. Omar Khayam expresses this

popular attitude: "I'll take the cash and let the credit go, nor heed the rumble of the distant drum." "I'll live for today," Omar said, "I'll live for today; I don't care about tomorrow; I don't care about eternity; I don't care about God." The Samaritan writings state that a person who depends upon material things and material standards is an unreliable, unstable person.

That is opposite from the lawyer's concern. However, neither one of these attitudes is that of Jesus. The good news of the Kingdom is that God's love can happen in the world through each of us. The Good Samaritan acts exactly as Jesus does. He relates God to everyday life. Jesus makes the lawyer think; not excuse or justify himself.

Accept the confrontation with spiritual responsibility. Grasp the idea that God has a purpose here for you. There is a reason for your existence. If we respond to needs around us like a squeezed-out orange, then we are not in the will of God. But, we have the privilege to translate the love of God to others (all others). This love is the experience of feeling the other person as a "bit of myself."

The point of this example story is that we should identify ourselves with the Priest and Levite if that is where we are right now, and then repent. Let us pray "Lord, I've been careless in not sharing your love as I should; I

have been reckless and selfish with your mercy; O God, forgive me for not channeling your love to all those around me; I've plugged up the channel; I've prevented you from sharing love through me to others. Forgive me!"

"See" is the most important word in this text. It is the pivot point of action. It is the confrontation with need. It shows us how we can share God's love. Pray that God will drop the blinders from the eyes of our soul. God can enable you to see need, and not prejudice.

Let God minister mercy through us. How would it feel to do that for the next seven days? Will you accept Jesus' challenge: Go, thou and do likewise? It costs; it cost the Samaritan much, but he had the excitement of being a restorer, of participating in the healing process.

Think of it! All those people need you and me. Show them God's love! A little flower girl was practicing at the wedding rehearsal. The adults' apprehension was satisfied as she walked before the bride and father picking off the petals. During the wedding, the next day, the minister entered with the groom and the best man. The organ continued playing as the maid of honor gracefully walked the center aisle. The tones of the organ increased as the congregation turned to see the flower girl enter ahead of bride and father. They waited and waited, but no flower girl. Finally the bride and father entered without the flower girl. After the wedding everyone asked her

"why didn't you come down the aisle? You did so well at the rehearsal." She kept saying "all those people, all these people." The seats were empty at the rehearsal. They forgot to tell her that there would be all those people at the wedding. She was afraid when she saw them.

God is telling us through this Scripture that we need to be aware of all those people; not be frightened, but to share His love. Showing mercy in restoring life is a sign of being in the Kingdom of God. The greatest power in the world is a person who is doing deeds of love and mercy to one who is in need of love and mercy. Do you know anyone like that? Jesus needs you to be His Good Samaritan now; where you live and work. Will you?

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